



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

Winner
SOCIETY
ARTIST



Cover artist
SAEJIN OH

COUNTRY: Canada

SOFTWARE USED:

Photoshop

WEB: saejinoh.deviantart.com



Saejin Oh let his imagination run riot to create this month's stunning sci-fi cover art. Through constant refinement he's melded real-world

technology into his futuristic vision, bringing to life this mech. Explore the ideas that brought it all together in his workshop on page 68. ●

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

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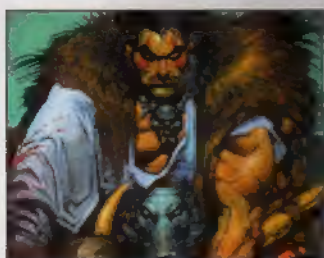
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Featured artists

Every month ImagineFX calls on some of the finest artists in the world to offer you the best guidance and to share their techniques and inspiration...



Simon Bisley



Comic-book artist Simon is this month's legendary artist. He made his name as an artist

for 2000 AD during the 1990s, working on classics such as ABC Warriors, Judge Dredd and Slaine. He has since worked for DC Comics, Heavy Metal and most recently Fluid Friction. Catch up with him on page 44.
www.chez.com/simonbisley



Ian Miller



Ian has been creating artwork since the 1960s and has become a respected fantasy artist,

having worked on graphic novels, pre-production for several films, and his own collections. He discusses his traditional-media work on page 62 and how, at age 62, he's still finding inspiration in virtually everything.
www.ian-miller.org



Patrick Reilly



As a child, Patrick would watch his father drawing caricatures - his first introduction to the world of

art. In particular, Frank Frazetta was a big influence, as Patrick proved in our tribute issue to the great artist. In the Q&A section beginning on page 36, he shows how to add traditional textures to your work.
preilly.deviantart.com



Ron Lemen



As well as being a busy freelance artist and a commissioned painter, Ron runs his own training

school, Studio 2nd Street, covering both traditional and digital media techniques. On page 94 he tackles one of the most important yet consistently difficult tasks for any artist: how to draw the human figure realistically.
www.studio2ndstreet.com



Henning Ludvigsen



ImagineFX regular Henning has extensive experience in advertising and games design,

as well as a variety of other freelance roles. Originally from Norway, he now lives in Greece, and on page 80 he explains how to give your art a truly professional look by adding those all-important final touches.
www.henningludvigsen.com

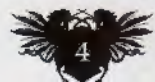


Joel Carlo



A multimedia developer during the day, a freelance artist at night, and a frequent

contributor to the ImagineFX forums, Joel is certainly a busy man. He's also a member of this issue's crack team answering your art queries and conundrums - you can find all the solutions beginning on page 36.
www.joelcarlo.net



Welcome... artist friends!



Isn't there something just, well, great, about giant robots? We definitely think so, and decided to recruit one of our favourite artists of the moment – Saejin Oh – to paint our stunning cover image and write an equally stunning workshop (page 68). You just can't afford to miss it.

Equally impressive is Ron Lemen's comprehensive guide on how to draw

the human figure. This is one of those difficult topics that crop up time and again, and Ron's experience as an art teacher makes him the ideal person to separate the facts from the mystique. Turn to page 94 for the lowdown.

Elsewhere, we interview the comic artist and cult hero Simon Bisley (page 44) and find out how to paint realistic wavy hair with resident artist Marta Dahlig (page 74). Also this issue, we're giving you a chance to tell us what you think of ImagineFX – and win a collection of Ballistic Publishing books worth nearly £400. Flip to page 31 for our Reader Survey – and be honest!

Enjoy the issue, which sadly is my last as editor. I can't tell you the fun I've had working on this magazine, and the huge number of friends I have to leave behind saddens me enormously. So, goodbye, so long, farewell, and keep painting...

Rob
Rob Carney, Editor
rob@imaginefx.com



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Subscribe now! Turn to page 34

Five things...

you'll find in this issue of ImagineFX

1 Finding inspiration

Even the pros sometimes feel like their job is just a chore – so how do they cope when the motivation disappears? **Page 22**



2 Michael Kutsche

The rising star of digital art discusses the Berlin scene, the joys of freelancing, and getting into film design work. **Page 54**



3 Sketchbook

French comic and animation artist Emmanuel Malin walks us through some of the favourite sketches in his weird and wonderful portfolio, which mixes black humour with dark imagery. **Page 50**

4 CGChallenge results

Announcing the results of the ImagineFX-sponsored CGSociety Challenge. See if you've bagged part of the \$100,000 prize fund! **Page 28**

5 Life is Humiliation

Cartoonist Matt Boyce is back with another slice of wisdom disguised as sheer insanity – or is it the other way around? **Page 26**



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Painter and illustrator Ron Lemen outlines what he calls the Industrial Design approach to figure drawing.

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"When you're painting curls you have to think in 3D, and work out how the hair falls and interacts..." Marta Dahlig (page 74)



Image courtesy of Mélanie Delon

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"I don't bother with
the whole laborious
process of planning"

Simon Bisley (page 44)

Re

THE PLA

1

Niccolo Balce

LOCATION: US

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Illustrator and Painter

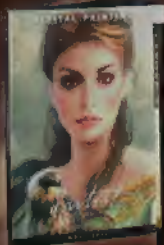


Way back when he was a kid, Niccolo used to trace robots from old Japanese magazines. "And I doodled on walls and furniture while watching *Back to the Future* and *The Goonies* on VHS," he confesses.

It wasn't until he went to high school in the 1990s that he first became serious about illustration, back in the days of Photoshop 4. "These days, drawing comics and freelance illustration gigs occupy most of my time and keep me from going back to tracing robots and doodling on walls," Niccolo laughs. That said, he still watches *Back to the Future* and *The Goonies*.

1 NO UMBRELLA This piece was inspired by rain and trains. "It revolves around how people could always choose to see things positively," Niccolo adds.

2 BARTER "The idea of trade between two very different races has always been interesting for me," says Niccolo. "Here I tried to imagine how it would go between mermaids and humans."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Niccolo Balce wins a copy of *Digital Painting 2*, and *Exposé 6*, showcasing the work of the universe's finest digital artists. To find out more, go to: www.ballisticpublishing.com.

ARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



ImagineFX September 2008

FXPose submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

Artist Nick Harris shares what he likes about Niccolo's image

"By creating such great interaction between the characters in a possible environment, Niccolo has made the unlikely seem plausible. What if..."



Ryan Wood

LOCATION: US

WEB: <http://woodyart.blogspot.com>

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SOFTWARE: Painter IX.5



Ryan got into art in his early teens. "It all started with pencil sketches of skulls," he explains. Influenced by skateboard art, cartoons and Star Wars, Ryan saw a presentation by fantasy artist James Christensen when he was at high school. "That did it for me," he says. "I wanted to be an artist for a living."

Supportive parents helped guide Ryan in the right direction and after graduating with a BFA in Illustration from Utah State University, he got a dream job in the games industry, where he's been working ever since. Currently an art director for Avalanche Software (Disney Interactive), Ryan likes to paint his own projects in his downtime.

1 PENNY COGSWORTH "Here we see a homeless robot who collects copper gears for food," Ryan says of this sad-themed image.

2 PHINEAS J. SALTONI III A creature of the deep. "The idea behind this guy is that he's an underwater steam-vent magnate," adds Ryan.



Dave Wilkins

LOCATION: US

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SOFTWARE USED: Painter and Photoshop



Dave's first encounter with fantasy art was Frazetta's Death Dealer. "That was the first spark," he grins. "The path was set." In his

late 20s, he was working as a bouncer, but decided to take a second job at the FedEx Kinko's store so he'd have access to a computer, and taught himself Photoshop. When a rap from Midway Games saw his work up on a monitor, he was offered a job. Dave currently works as a concept artist in film and games, and as a comic artist for Marvel.

1 THE CONQUISTADORS This piece was mostly done in Photoshop. "The armour was done with overlays of fonts," says Dave. "The background was gesso on board that was scanned in and overlaid into the image."

2 THE BLACK PANTHER "What I wanted to get out of this cover is the feel of watching the great cats on the Discovery Channel," explains Dave. "The cameraman captures the beast in his natural habitat and just when you think he isn't aware, he turns and looks right at you, just to let you know he knew you were there all along and allowed you to get that close."





Noah Kloczek
LOCATION: US
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS3



Born in 1977 - "the year that the release of Star Wars changed science fiction forever" - Noah spent his childhood reading nothing but fantasy, only discovering sci-fi in junior high.

"After high school I expected I would head to art school and spend my life illustrating children's books," says Noah. "Instead I was introduced to the film industry and digital painting."

Although he still loves books, the film industry is Noah's artistic home. "After art school I was lucky enough to land a job at Industrial Light & Magic as an apprentice matte painter, and following a year there, I spent two years as a matte painter at PDI/DreamWorks."

After this, Noah was ready for anything, so he set off in search of new challenges. He was lucky enough to find a place at Pixar Animation Studios as a concept artist. "I'm currently working at Pixar and living nearby in Berkeley with my wife and daughter," he says.

1 ROBBIN A development piece for a children's book. "You can see the original drawing in the final image, used as a Multiply layer over the painting to help hold the edges," says Noah.

2 SCI-FI SCAN "I was trying to think of a cool way to show a space marine in peril," says Noah of this image.



Brian Churilla

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.brianchurilla.com

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Brian always had strong reactions to cartoon images as a youngster, which is how he got started in art. "I started emulating the things I'd seen in comics at a very early age," he explains.

This led to a career in illustration. Although he freelances for advertising and publishing, he knows his true calling. "It's comic books where I feel most at home," he says.

In 2007 Brian co-created and illustrated *The Engineer* for Archia Studios Press. "It's a story about a cosmonaut who uses a steam-powered pipe organ to travel to different dimensions," Brian explains.

And if you like the sound of that, you'll be glad to hear that myriad comic book projects are slated for release in the near future.

Brian lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife, cat and dog.

1 FEAR AGENT A pin-up for a comic book about an intergalactic exterminator, Fear Agent. Pencils by Brian, inks by Hillary Barta and Colours (Photoshop) by Jason Millet.

2 XXXOMBIE Pin-up for the comic book *XXXombies*. Brian did the pencilling and inking, while Jeremy Shepherd did the colours in Photoshop.



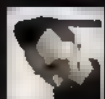
Bob Strang

LOCATION: US

WEB: vontoten.deviantart.com

EMAIL: B_Strang@Comcast.net

SOFTWARE: Flash 4, Photoshop



Bob's experience of the digital realm first started back in his high school days in 1989.

"There was a program that ran from DOS called Dr Halo 3," he says. "I would push pixels in that program for hours."

Though Bob describes himself as traditionally minded, he never closed his mind to digital art. "To do such a thing would have been certain death for an artist," he observes. "For that was the way of the future."

So, right after leaving art school in 1999, Bob taught himself Flash 4 – and has been using that version ever since. "I've tried the later versions," he says. "But I have to admit, I haven't really cared for them."

That same year, 1999, found Bob in his first animation job. "I was introduced for the first time to the Wacom tablet, and ever since then, that's been the way of production for me," he explains. Sometimes, but not too often, embellishments occur in Photoshop.

MISS TAKE The inspiration for this "intergalactic rockabilly cowgirl" came from thin air. "She's my own creation," says Bob. "Just popped into my head one day so I drew her."

IFX INSIGHT



"The colours on this character are fantastic, as is the pose. She's sassy, sexy and clearly not to be messed with. The position of the sheriff's badge is a nice – if slightly ouch-inducing – touch too."

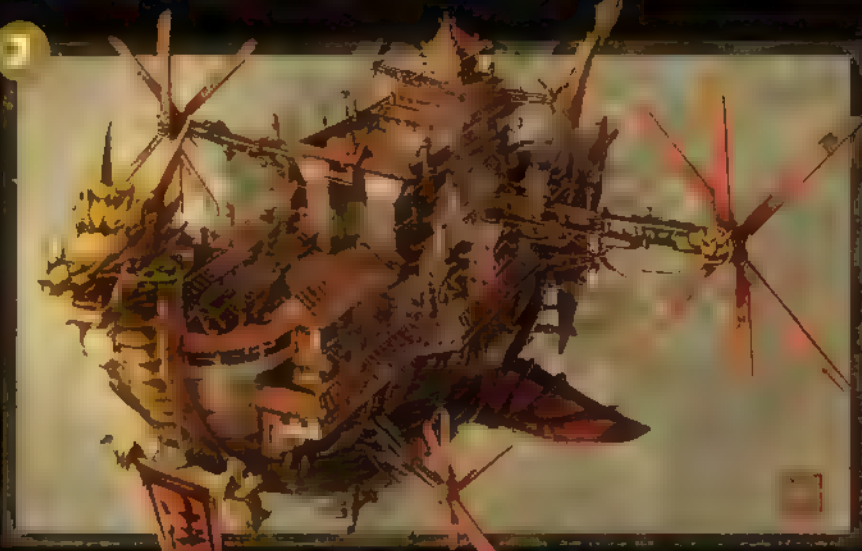
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FX INSIGHT

"James successfully splices elements of traditional Eastern culture with old-school robot and vehicle designs. You can only imagine the fantastical realms these vehicles would exist in."

—*Paul Hill*
—*Art Editor*



James Kin-Cheung Ng

LOCATION: Hong Kong
WEB: www.jamesngart.com
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



James Ng (pronounced "Ing") was born in Hong Kong, where he spent most of his childhood drawing monsters and robots, making his own elaborate cardboard toys, and playing football.

Ever since then, he's been on the move between Hong Kong, Vancouver, Chicago and New York. His travels have greatly influenced him, enabling him to combine Eastern and Western cultures in his artwork.

Although he still dreams of being a pro football player, James knows that visual art is the career he will pursue and to that end he's working hard towards becoming a concept artist for movies, games, and toy preproduction. "One day, I hope to start a design company with some friends, and maybe even direct a movie featuring all my monsters and robots," he says.

1 HARVESTER "It's harvest season and it's time to get busy," James explains. "Luckily, the job is now a lot easier with this steam-powered harvest bot."

2 IMPERIAL AIRSHIP A combination of imperial designs from the Qing Dynasty and industrial steam machines. "The Imperial airship carries her majesty in style," says James.





© DC Comics

Clément Sauvé

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



As a kid, Clément was a huge Star Wars fan, and he loved drawing. "So when I discovered the Art of Star Wars book, filled with

incredible marker-rendered illustrations and designs, I knew that was what I wanted to do for a living," he says. Clément went into graphic arts, and then moved to comics. "But I was never a big fan of superheroes," he admits.

Heroes may not have floated his boat, but sci-fi did, so Clément filled his portfolio with illustrations done in his spare time – "just stuff I loved to draw." Those illustrations got the attention of Tim Miller and Chuck Wojtkiewicz from Blur Studios. So, based on nothing more than their confidence that he could handle concept art, Clément got his first job designing backgrounds and props for the comic Iron and the Maiden.

That job eventually led to some 2D animation character design work for Cookie Jar, then Hasbro, and eventually more work for Blur.

Most recently, Clément been doing work for Conceptopolis and Hasbro, toy designs inspired by the hugely successful Iron Man movie.

STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES

A little redesign of a few Stormwatch characters, done for a side project," is how Clément describes this illustration. Clément did the line work by hand and then used the same technique as he uses when sketching with a marker – "except that the greys and highlights were done in Photoshop instead."

2 ANISSA Done for one of the Official Handbooks to the Invincible Universe by Image Comics: "This is the first published illustration for which I did pencils, inks and colours," says Clément.



© Robert Kirkman

Ruan Jia

LOCATION: China
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Ruan Jia is from southern China and likes comics, movies and music. "I also like drawing very much," he adds. Right now, he's working at a gaming company located in his home town, but his work is strictly under wraps.

"I've dedicated more than seven years to CG," he says. "And I'm still addicted to it." Artistic creation provides the chance for emotional release. "I get lots of fun from all my artworks," he enthuses.

Jia plans to keep his online gallery right up to date with all his favourite work. "I hope you guys will enjoy it," he says. "And if you have any suggestions or comments please drop it in the comment field, see ya there!"

ELEGY Inspiration for this came from a friend's gaze, explains Jia. "I like the look in this character's eyes, it's extremely cold and aloof!" he adds.

UNRAVEL MYSTERY Jia explains the story: "The prince came to a city that used to be extremely popular. He hoped he could find the witch who lived in the labyrinth beneath a castle." As for technique: "For the first time, I finished the sketch first and then painted it," says Jia. "The sketch part was done smoothly, but the painting part really twisted me. I almost gave up halfway."

VOID CONQUEROR This, says Jia, is a scene that can only be seen in dreams. "The characters on the march are dead knights," says Jia. "They're under the command of the powerful, undead legion."

IFX INSIGHT



Jia has captured the expression perfectly in *Elegy* – this character looks very cold and vaguely threatening. I also like the storytelling in *Unravel Mystery*: who knows what the prince will discover?"

Kyle Lee
Production Editor





2



Javler Burgos

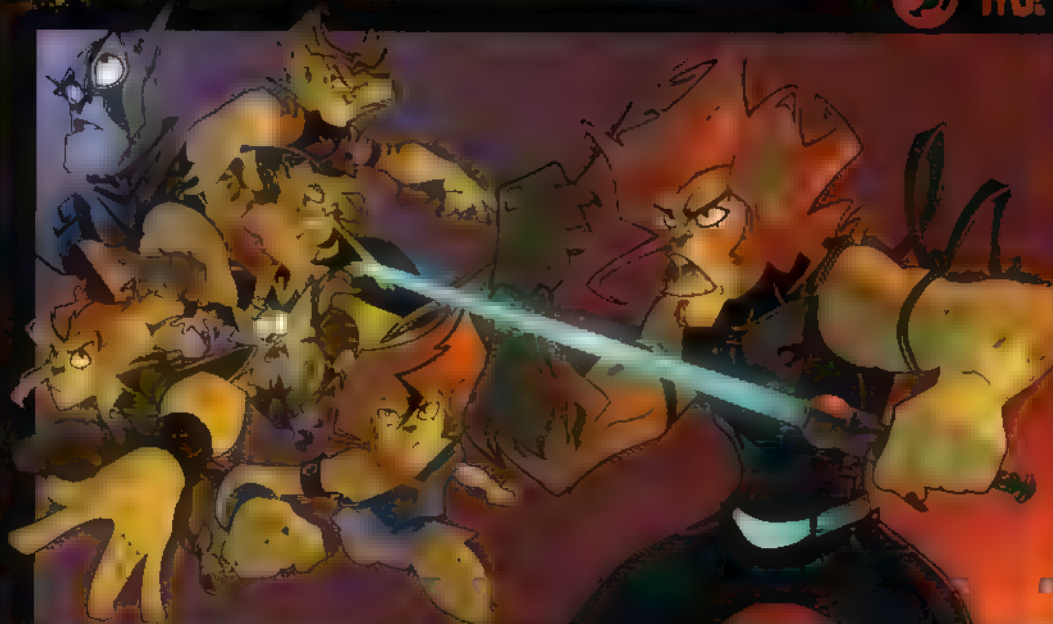
LOCATION: Spain
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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Javier has worked on a variety of projects, doing storyboards for TV and cinema, and some illustrations, but his real passions are comics and animation. Right now he's working on his own comic book and doing some designs for a music/animation project. "My main influences come from the American/European comic books, certain manga such as Dragon Ball and Akira, and, specially, animated films, from Disney to Miyazaki," he says.

1 FAIRYTALE LANDSCAPE A double-page spread from Javier's own comic book: Farewell Fairy Tales. "My influence from animation affects not only my style," he says, "but also the way I work. I'm used to working with the background and the characters in different layers."

2 THUNDERCATS HO! "I wanted dynamic poses," says Javier. "I love drawing with very thin lines: It gives a very clean animation look."



Adam Ford

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SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop and Maya



Adam graduated from BYU with a Bachelors in Illustration. Currently a technical artist for Disney Interactive Studios, he mainly creates environments for video games in Maya.

"My paintings are mostly exercises for me to keep up on my skills and figure out principles of art and light," he says. Adam is constantly challenging himself and striving to improve his skills.

1 PANTHRO: PORTRAIT OF A HERO

Sean Galloway has made a great name for himself re-envisioning retro themes and Adam had always liked his take on the Thundercats. "It was one of my favourite cartoons when I was growing up," he tells us. "I attempted Lion-O several times but failed. One time, I was sketching out heads in church and I thought that this one kinda could be Panthro."

2 THE SHAMAN'S SUMMIT

Jose Lopez did this fantastic piece of a man getting shot in the eye with an arrow," Adam recalls. "I wanted to take that idea and turn him into an Obi-Wan Kenobi guide for a Viking. Eric Canete's contour work influenced the Viking. The goat head guy is straight from a Samurai Jack episode. And finally the snow thing was inspiration I got from Dice Tsutsumi's work on Robots."

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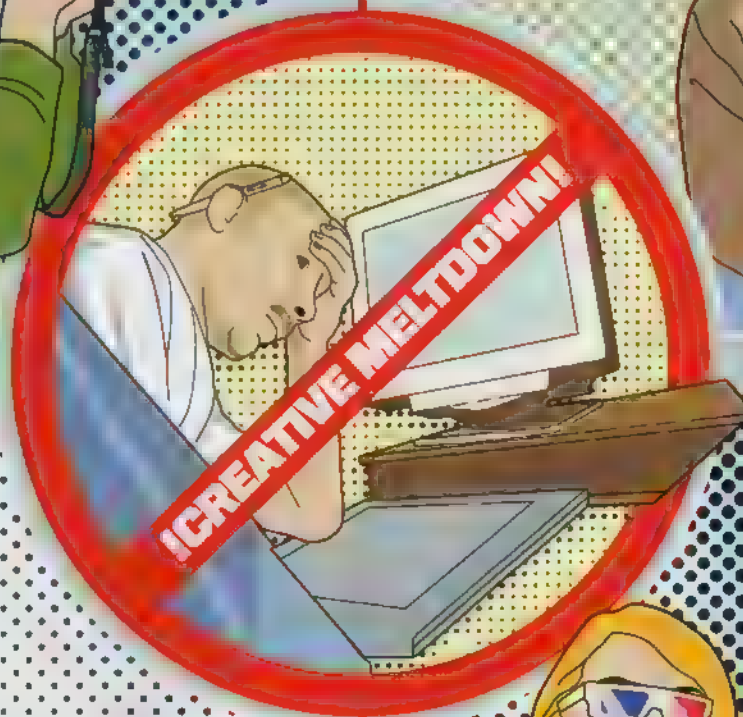
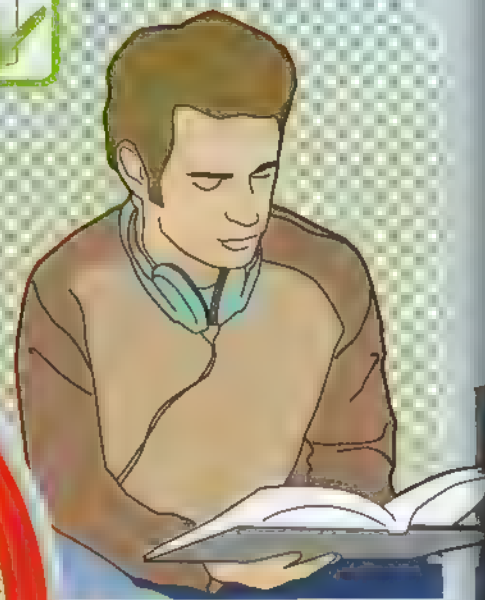
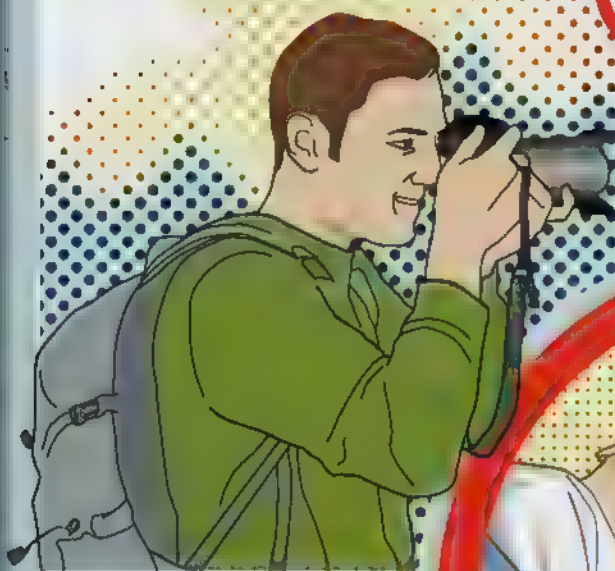
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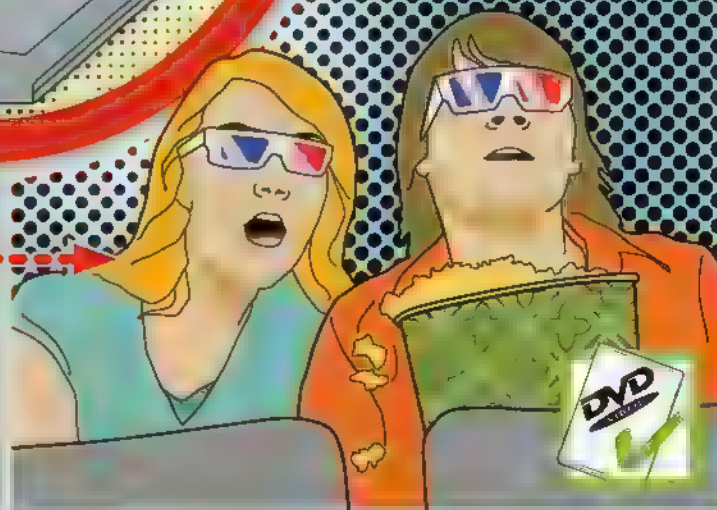
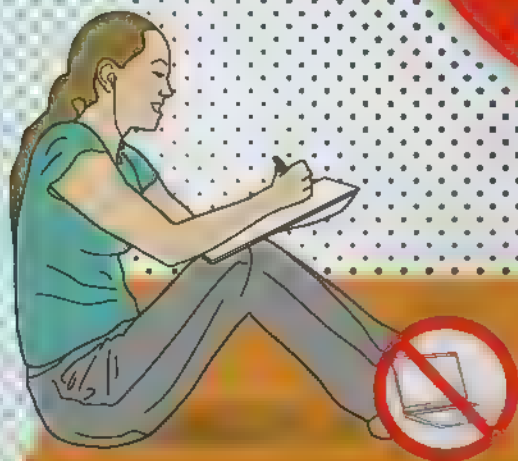


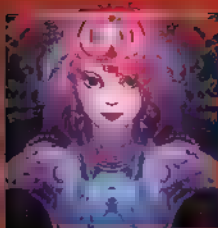
GET READING



GOALGETTER

IMAGINE IS GOOD





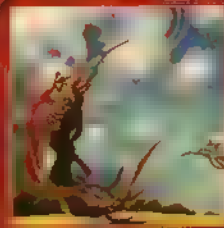
ANDROID ADDS TO ANIMATION

Illuminated is a new animation series set in Tokyo and based on the character Aya brought to you by Andrew Jones, Andy Vogt and John Doe. Page 21



RED PIXY AND THE GOLD RUSH

Beijing's Red Pixy is the game studio working on a new MORPG. Read how the studio is planning to create a fantastic game. Page 21



CG SOCIETY'S CHALLENGE

Take a look at the members of the CG Society's Challenge, including this designer Simon Dominic Brewer. Page 21



Should you experience creative crash

please read the following carefully

Keep the faith Even the pros sometime feel their job is a grinding bore – so how do they cope with the blues?

It's one of the most dispiriting experiences an artist can have: you fire up Painter, look at the project you've been working on for the past few weeks, and suddenly realise that you feel entirely diffident about it. The thought of working on it further just leaves you cold, and inspiration seems to have fled.

In short, you feel you're in a rut and the project seems endless. But take heart – even the most driven artists feel at times that they'd rather be doing anything else but drawing.

“Just knowing that if I don't finish the work on time then I'm letting everybody else down, forces me to get on with it” Bryan Talbot

Long-run projects can be really painful as time passes” agrees concept artist JS Rossbach (<http://livingrope.free.fr>) “When you spend two years drawing a book or creating designs for a video game five days a week, you just can't escape that feeling, and sometimes you're as bored as hell!”

Of course, you don't necessarily have to be working on a project for a while before you get bored of it. And it can strike both the freelance artist and those working in a studio or on a long contract. In the latter case, it often helps to think about the wider picture. “Deadlines are a great motivator if you're working on a weekly or monthly comic with other people,” reckons veteran comic artist and writer Bryan Talbot (www.bryan-talbot.com). “Just knowing that if I don't finish the work on time then I'm letting everybody else down forces me to get on with it.”

Another obvious motivator, he says, is money. “Most times, you don't get paid until about a month after you finish the artwork [on a comic]. Even when advances are involved, they're usually split up into different payments that are received at various stages, so it really is in your interests to get the bloody thing finished and out there.”

Being a freelancer, Bryan admits he usually has the luxury of being able to change his art style and subject with each project, which stops him from being bored witless. “If that's not possible because you're on a contract or in a studio, says JS Rossbach, “then don't ask yourself too many questions and

LEE CARTER

Video game concept artist Lee Carter tells us how he copes when he lacks enthusiasm

How do you stop your work becoming 'just a job'?

One of the reasons I went into art was so that my job never became just a job. One of the great things about art is that it never becomes repetitive, you will always come across new problems with each brief and it's up to you to find a creative answer – plus you're always striving to improve yourself.

Does working on personal projects help keep your creative juices flowing?

It's important to have your own thing going on outside of work. My concept art job doesn't finish until seven at night. When I get home I spend two hours playing with my kids and then come nine o'clock I'm back at my desk working on comic art. For instance, I recently finished a 78-page comic strip for 2000 AD – I did it in the evenings with very tight deadlines.

Any tips or tricks for when motivation is low?

The greatest motivation is to get better and improve. The cool thing about art now is that the tools are so varied you would never be short of something new to try. But saying that, video game development can last for years, so you may find yourself stuck on a project you care little about. It's at this point you should think about personal projects to keep your morale up.



Lee Carter works as a concept artist for Bizarre Creations and his freelance comic book work has appeared in 2000 AD.

www.myspace.com/carterworld

Continued from previous page...



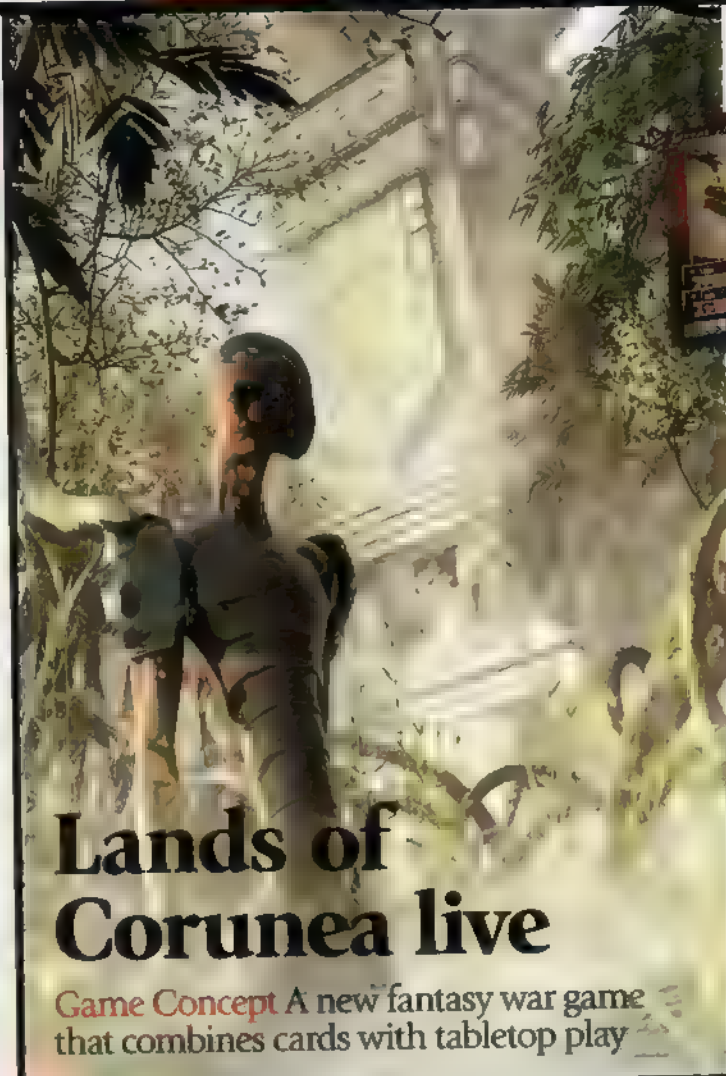
Grandville is Bryan Talbot's new detective graphic novel. His book, *The Tale of One Bad Rat* is being reprinted in August.

simply do the job. Even if it's a pain in the ass, even if you know that you only produce crap, just get on with it. Being a pro is also the ability to do the job when you have to."

Outside of work, he adds "you absolutely need to find some time to work on subjects you'd love to draw but no one will give you the opportunity to." Film and game concept artist Raphael Lacoste's (www.rafael-lacoste.com) spare time is precious, he says so he really makes the most of it. "When my job is frustrating, I really need to paint stuff for my own artistic needs. An artist's wife must be very patient and understanding! I need to have this personal passion and time to practice, but sometimes that can be just looking at nice pictures in an art book or practicing my photography skills."

In fact, he advises, do anything else at all. "Watch movies, read books, look at pictures, learn from Masters, challenge yourself with some observational drawings, draw on paper or take your camera out for a trip." And remember, as JS Rossbach points out: "You'll suffer, but when it's done you'll be proud of yourself."

How do you stay creative? Log on to the forums and let us know.



Lands of Corunea live

Game Concept A new fantasy war game that combines cards with tabletop play

The cards have vivid illustrations that show special 'boosters' to play the game.

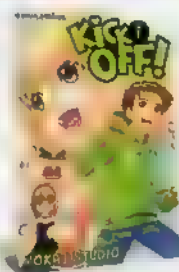


Lands of Corunea is a new Role Card Game (RCG), a cross between an RPG and a trading card game. The founding project for Insight Games, it uses more than 250 original illustrations to unite the depth of tabletop gaming with the rapid-fire exhilaration of card-play.



Olivier Lésart, Renaud Charpentier and Eric Bourderau founded Insight in 2006 with one goal in mind: to bring the Lands of Corunea into being. "It's a new concept of tabletop game using cards and dice," explains Olivier. "It invites players to heroic journeys in a fierce and original fantasy world."

The development has been a big learning curve. "We learned that in small card illustrations composition and lighting are key," he says. www.corunea.com



Swedish manga

New release Kick Off! Soccer, school and the supernatural

Yokaj Studio, Sweden's first and most established manga studio, is currently working double time to finish the first two volumes of its long-form graphic novel, which is called Kick Off!

To be published in Sweden in the autumn by B. Wahlströms, the manga is aimed at boys and girls alike. This can be a difficult thing to achieve, as Yokaj's Yosh observes: "It seems that boys have a harder time with girl manga, while girls aren't as picky."

Planned to run to six volumes, the studio is busy looking for publishers outside Sweden. The main lesson from juggling a graphic novel, illustration work and game design? "Everything always takes longer to do than expected!" Yosh advises sagely. www.yokajstudio.com



Illuminated

By Andrew Jones Imagining a ray of light in a world that can no longer dream

With collapsing economies, media saturation and an online alternative to everyday disappointments, *Illuminated* is a new animated series set in an alternative universe from which we can all learn.

And it looks stunning, which isn't surprising considering its three creators: Anson Vogt (phong.com), Josh Shore (gmm.tv) and Andrew Jones (massiveblack.com).

The story, explains Andrew Jones, lead concept artist on the project, follows Aya, a Dreamstar from a futuristic Tokyo as she journeys around the earth to connect with the wisdom-

keepers of the planet to re-learn the art of real dreams.

"Our intention," says co-director Anson Vogt, aka Phong, "is to patch a world based around quantum physics, spirituality and dream culture, where anything is possible and any number of artistic aesthetics are free to be explored." According to Josh, the overarching goal of the series is "to bridge fantasy with science fiction while staying true to a social commentary on the harsh realities of our planet."

The teaser trailer is online now and full production is underway. www.illuminated.com



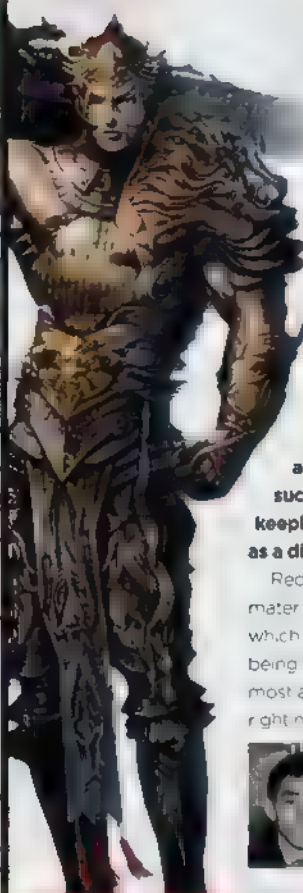
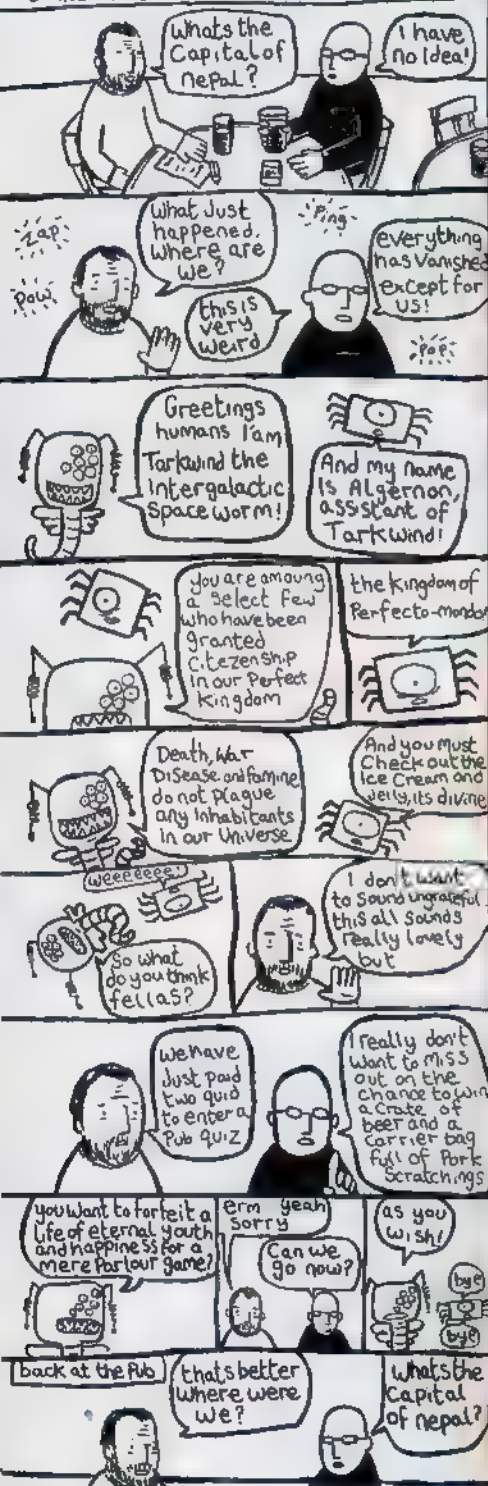
Illuminated features intricate design elements that bring to life its dream world.



This is Aya, a Dreamstar from a futuristic Tokyo.

Life is Humiliation by Matt Boyce

Our Protagonists are about to have their Weekly Pub Quiz disturbed by an unexpected trans-dimensional Phenomenon!



Red Pixy and the gold rush

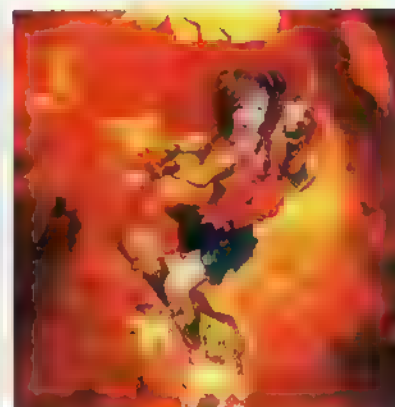
Chinese MMORPGs An endless appetite for online gaming

China's economic expansion has given rise to an almost insatiable appetite for online gaming. Studios such as Beijing's Red Pixy are busy keeping up with what's being described as a digital 'gold rush'.

Red Pixy has been working on marketing materials for a new MMORPG called Xun Xia which means 'In search of the celestial being'. This game ranks among the top 10 most awaited MMORPG games in China right now, says studio boss David Yang.



David is proud of Xun Xia because it presents a more original aesthetic. It's a cross between traditional Chinese painting and digital art, he



"Our concept artists are very young and energetic, some are still in college," says Red Pixy's David Yang.

says. And it's been achieved with a relatively inexperienced team. Some of them haven't worked on live projects, says David. "But with guidance from our senior artists they can produce great work." www.redpixy.com

Fantasy talk: Explaining the inexplicable

"Simon gave me a page from *Sláine The Horned God* showing Ulko following another dwarf down an alleyway."



Dust jackets as recreation

In his brand new work for *The January Dancer*, Sparth depicts the space race... literally.



When Tor approached Nicolas Bouvier, AKA Sparth, to paint the cover of Michael Flynn's latest space opera, *The January Dancer*, he chose a single passage from the novel as inspiration.

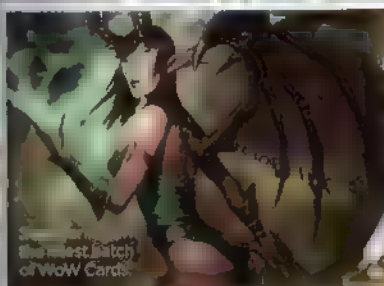
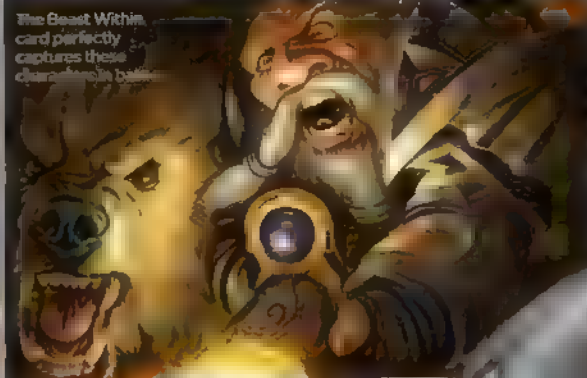
"I think it's much better imagining a

cover with just two or three lines of the book," says Nicolas. "The book is a space opera with the entire story of the book made to represent the space battle."

the book covers a lot of different challenges. Nicolas' day job at IDW is in Dallas.



The Beast Within card perfectly captures these characters in battle.



The Hunt for Illidan

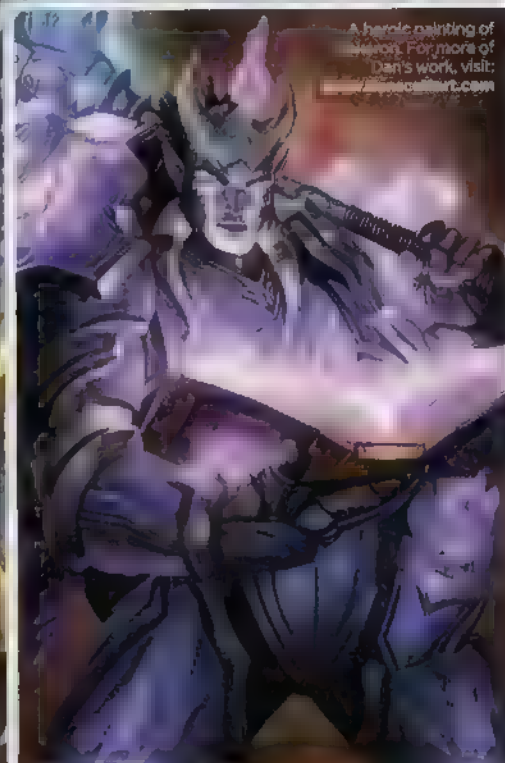
WoW TCG New cards build on links between tabletop and laptop game

The latest deck of World of Warcraft Trading Cards is now available. Hunt for Illidan brings together the tabletop and online games with a number of 'Loot' cards providing online upgrades.

Artist Dan Scott supplied artwork for eight cards in the new set, one of them a super secret 'Loot' card was pretty excited to work on this batch of

images as there was a good mix of interesting characters," he says.

To ensure his character designs pay we, Dan used high contrast between figure and background. He also made the characters interact with the viewer as much as possible whether it be a full on attack like The Beast Within or a sexy expression like in Sarila. Find out more at the website, <http://entertainment.upperdeck.com>.



A heroic painting of Illidan. For more of Dan's work, visit: www.artfolk.com

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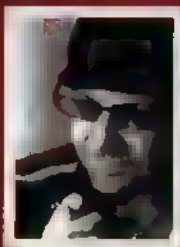
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CCG SOCIETY
SOCIETY OF DIGITAL ARTISTS



"I start off with great blobs of colour that I hack away at until something recognisable appears"

says Simon Dominic Brewer, Master Award winner

We have a winner!

Uplift Universe inspires artists to new heights

For the last three months the forums of CGSociety.org have been buzzing with activity as artists from around the world consider the creative implications of CGSociety's challenge - called Uplift Universe - to explore human-alien interaction. Now, their time is up, the votes have counted and the winners have been announced. So who will be taking the \$100,000 worth of prizes?

In the still image category it's Michael Dashow's "Uplift" that has won the prize.

Michael Dashow, 34, is a professional storyboard artist and his shiny new Boxx workstation arrived really early and, concluding chances of winning were negligible, he'd pretty much forgotten all about it. He also has a subscription to ImagineFX and his winning entry graces the subscriber's box this very issue.

Michael's entry, which captures a joyful moment in the relationship between two different species, was intended to give a cheery moment. "I wanted it to be uplifting," says the artist. "I was adding elements of space and technology and sunshine and happy things." Michael is following closely on his heels to claim the Best of Show Award, Michael Dashow also has a winning entry in the Uplifting theme. "I have a toddler who is really into space and I was thinking if he enjoys this or whether it's tedious."

Michael's winning entry, "Uplift," is a beautiful scene of a man and a woman in a futuristic setting, both looking up at the sky with expressions of awe and wonder.

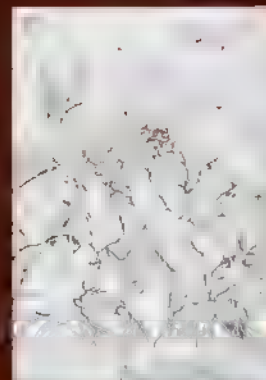
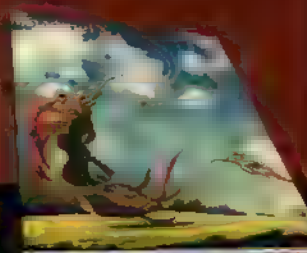
Michael's winning entry, "Uplift," is a beautiful scene of a man and a woman in a futuristic setting, both looking up at the sky with expressions of awe and wonder.

CGSociety president Mark Snoswell says the challenge is all about art and artists. "The winners have gone on to new commissions as a direct result of the publicity they gain from the challenge."

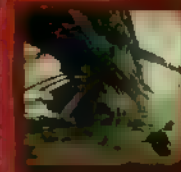
For more information and to see the winners in all their glory, visit the website at: http://www.cgsociety.org/story_custom.asp?story_id=4526



"First I produce the artwork on paper," explains Michael Dashow. "Then I throw on a scanner and I start painting over the whole thing."



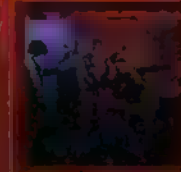
Simon Dominic Brewer's winning entry in the Uplift Universe challenge can be seen on our September issue this time.



Artist: Ioan Dumitrescu
Title: All within Her Hands



Artist: Kahrman
Title: The Ocean with the Pets



Artist: Andrzej Sykut
Title: Trip to the Souk



Artist: Miguel Angelo CBT
Title: Fishes



Artist: Miguel Lisowski
Title: Uplift



Artist: Mathieu Didier
Title: Trippin' Tranklin



Artist: Daniel Lieske
Title: Saving the Alien Girl



Artist: Michael Dashow
Title: Uplift



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX Forum
Image of the month

Subtle approach We meet the winner of the IFX forum's hotly contested cyberpunk challenge



A forum regular for nearly two years, Malla - aka Meghann Beardsley from St Louis, Missouri - has taken part in many of its

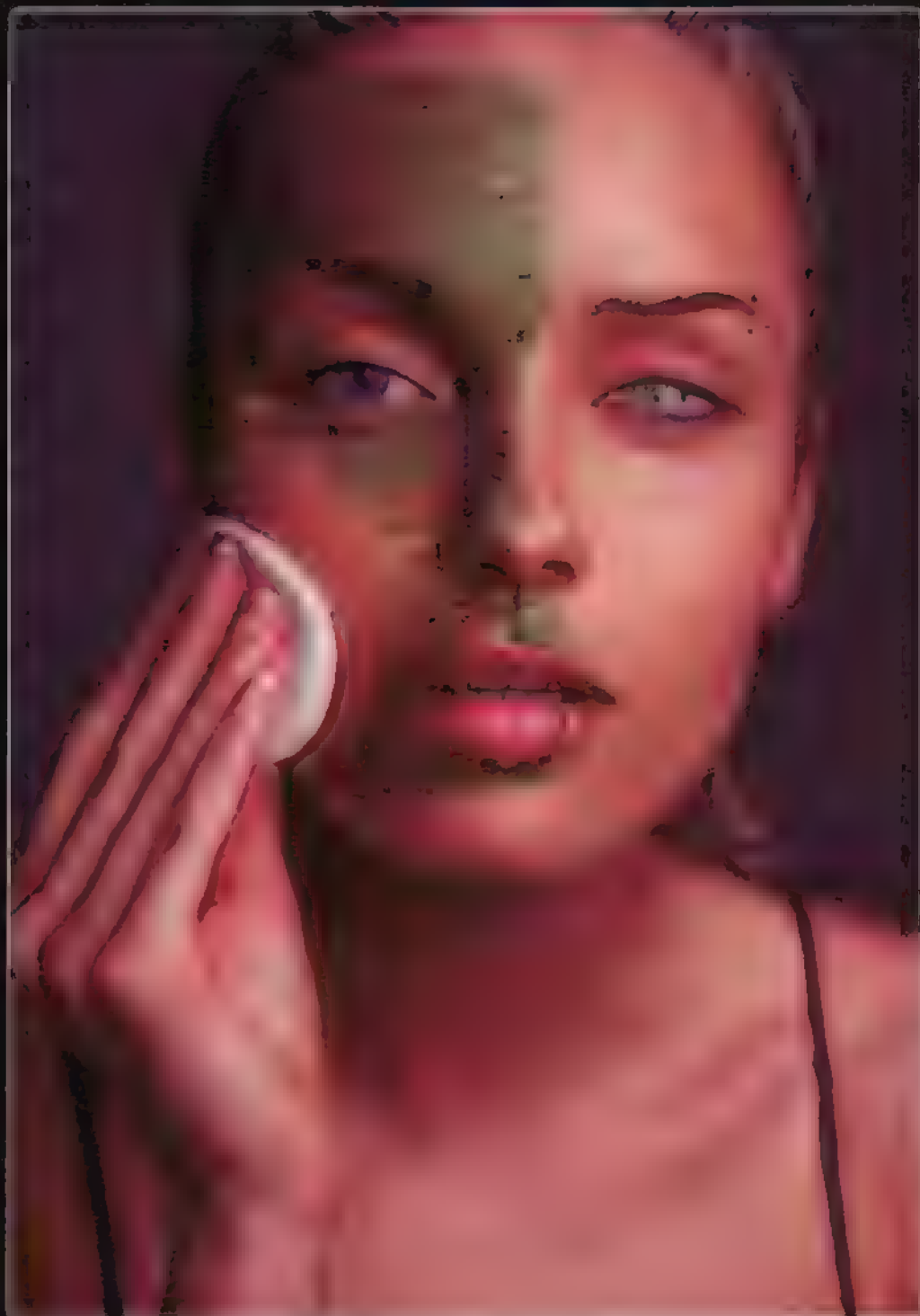
challenges and she bags the Image of the Month award for her entry. Nestled in among gritty, urban cyberpunks, Malla's sexy, calm and collected cybergirl stood out from the crowd.

"I seem to prefer taking the subtler path in these challenges," she muses.

And it's an approach that won her the votes of her peers, and impressed us here in the ImagineFX office, too.

Taking up digital art after discovering the work of Linda Bergkvist and finding issue Q3 of ImagineFX in a bookstore, Malla thinks that the forums have really helped her develop her artistic skills - and made her a few friends along the way.

As for the winning image: "I got the idea by looking through my photo-collection," she explains. "Seeing one of my sister putting on her stage makeup before her day competition gave me the idea of masks and makeup - covering things up." Like many artists, Malla doesn't paint as often as she'd like, either due to work or a lack of inspiration, but she's dedicated to her craft - this image took her about two or three days to finish, and she used Painter IX. ●



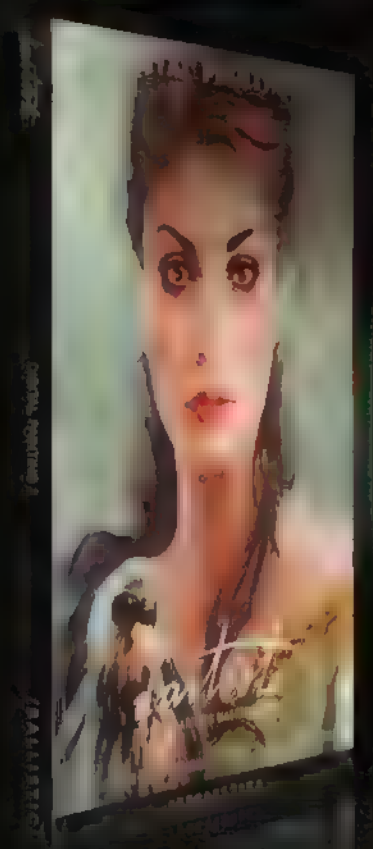
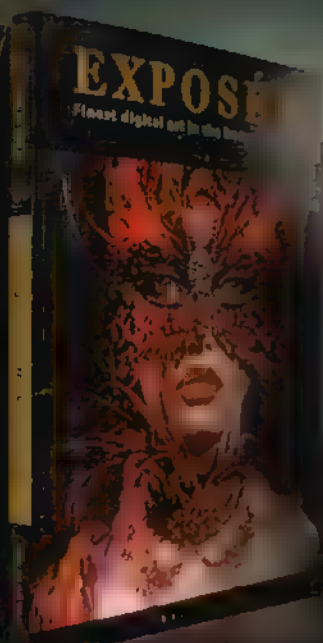
MYFX theme: Cyberpunk

Winner: Malla

http://community.imaginefx.com/fxpose/mallas_portfolio/

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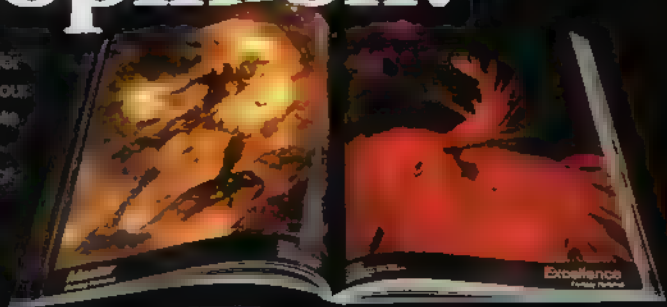
Whether you're a professional artist,
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Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Rob Carney, on rob@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

From cover to cover

I love your magazine and accompanying DVD. It's very informative and written in a true 'artist helping artist' format that's not intimidating. In fact, it's written in a nurturing and inspirational way that feeds the creative process.

I've just started digital painting and, well, I'm not very good at it. Then I started reading ImagineFX and followed its guidance. Slowly I started to get better at digital painting and began to notice a real difference in my work. Thank you for that. Maybe, just maybe, my work will be in this cool magazine one day – that's my goal.

I would also like to suggest to everyone learning out there the demos from the fellows at www.massiveblack.com. They also teach in a very cool, down to earth way. I'd love to see an article by Andrew Jones or Jason Chan in the pages of ImagineFX.

ImagineFX is the only magazine I have ever subscribed to that I read from cover to cover every single issue. Thank you very much Rob and everyone at ImagineFX for the great source of information. Keep up the good work.

Jeff Schoettler, via email

Rob replies Wow... thanks Jeff, that's high praise. Massive Black are indeed truly excellent – we've featured workshops by both Andrew and Jason in previous issues, and we hope to do so again.

Damian's painting (below) takes lots of inspiration from Gerhard Mozzi's workshop in issue 32.



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 33?

See page 73 for details on how you can get your hands on a copy.



Super Syd

I can't put into words how pleased I was with July's amazing issue of ImagineFX! Being a huge fan of all things science fiction and an even bigger fan of the great Syd Mead, I was really pleased to read your workshop on painting in the style of Mead. As I'm still getting to grips with digital painting, I found Gerhard Mozzi's perspective on the future urban cityscape a real inspiration, and it made me want to take the painting challenge!

Damian Jones, via email

Rob replies Great work on the painting, Damian. We were extremely thrilled ourselves to be able to feature both Syd Mead and HR Giger in one issue – they really are living legends.

Get some rocks on?

I wanted to say thank you for publishing such a wonderful magazine. I'm an illustrator finishing my Masters degree at Savannah College of Art and Design in the United States. I've been buying ImagineFX off the magazine stand for the last six or seven issues and I love the work and materials on the DVDs. As you've already featured Tree brushes on several DVDs, I wondered if you might include some Rock or Cloud brushes, too – I think they would be very useful for your readers. Thanks and keep up the great work.

Alexander Gustafson, via email

Rob replies Thanks Alexander – and remember, you could save a bundle by subscribing (see page 34 for details). As for the art brushes, we'll certainly see what we can do in a future issue. We have some special fantasy-themed brushes on this issue's DVD.

Both Andrew Jones (workshop from issue 09, left) and Jason Chan have contributed to ImagineFX. If you'd like to see an artist feature in ImagineFX, let us know!

Our star letter writer wins a year's subscription to ImagineFX!

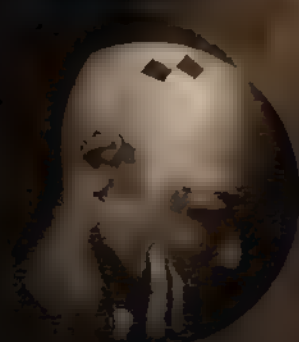
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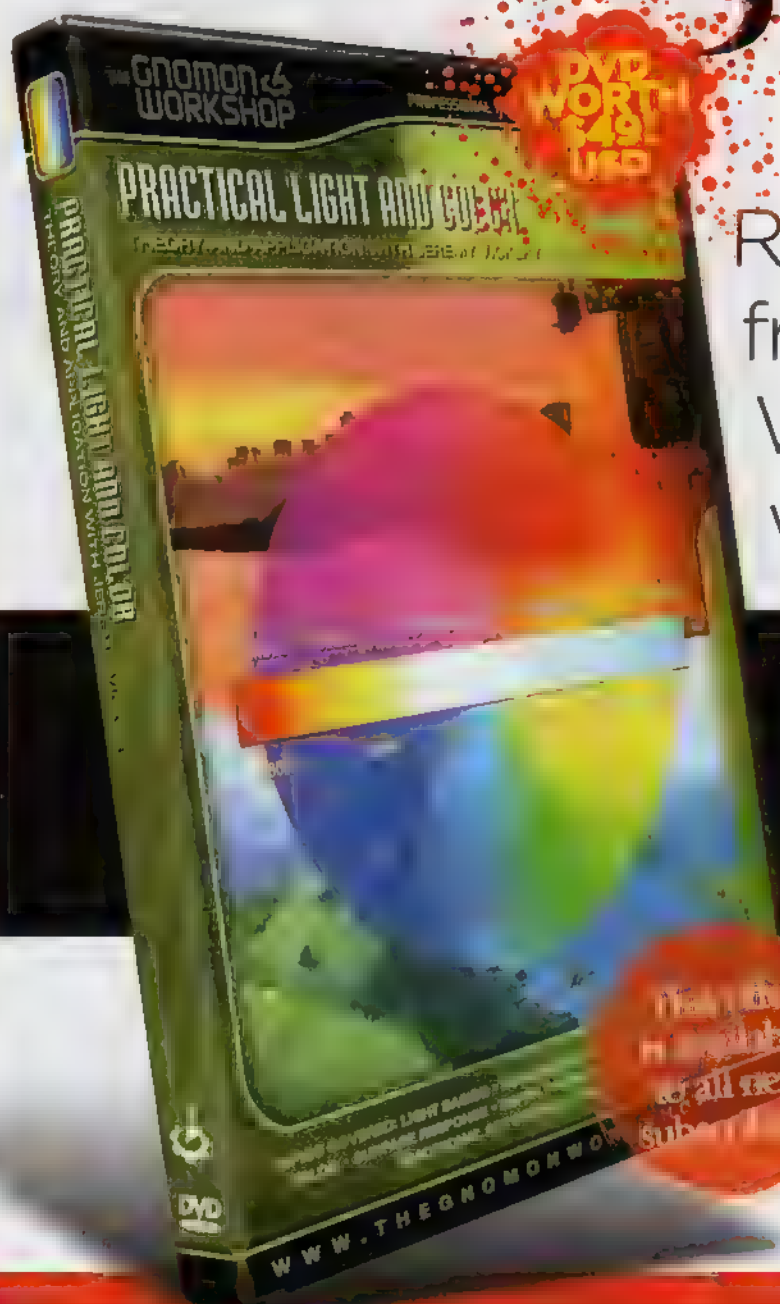
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Illustration by David Ho | www.davidho.com

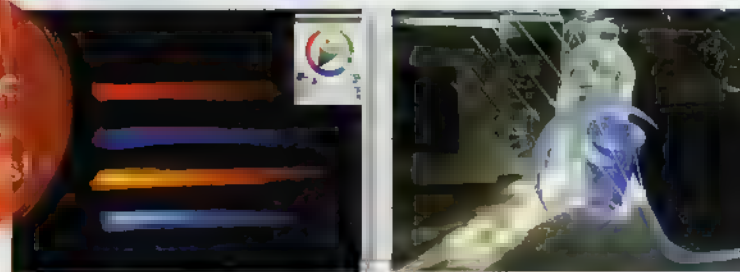
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Jonny Duddle,
Freelance artist

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Artist Q&A

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The ImagineFX panel

Marek Okon



Marek is an experienced sci-fi and fantasy artist, though he started out as a web designer. He has worked as a digital illustrator for two years.

omen2501.deviantart.com

Katarina Sokolova



Katarina has been a digital painter for five years. She is also a photographer and regularly exhibits her work in her home town of Kiev.

www.katarinasokolova.com

Saejin Oh



Saejin is a 24-year-old freelance illustrator who works for Udon. He loves creating concept art and character designs.

saejinoh.deviantart.com

Patrick Reilly



Patrick was inspired to become an artist by watching his father draw caricatures, and discovered fantasy art via the work of Frank Frazetta.

preilly.deviantart.com

Marta Dahlig



Polish artist Marta has been working with Photoshop and Painter for a number of years and has become a regular contributor to ImagineFX.

www.marta-dahlig.com

Joel Carlo



Joel is a multimedia developer by day and a prolific digital artist by night. You may know him by his alter ego, used on forums: MechaHateChimp.

www.joelcarlo.net

Francis Tsai



Francis is a freelance conceptual designer who's worked in many fields, including games, comics, film and television commercials.

www.teamgt.com

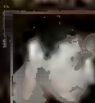
ImagineFX digital character design uses only the mixed brush method to create textures. No photo textures are required for the images.

Full-size Q&A images are on your DVD

Here we have a close-up of the character. Notice the grain created by the charcoal and the feathery strokes of the camelhair brush.

How do I apply traditional-style textures to a digital painting?

Patrick replies



In traditional painting, textures naturally appear as a result of your process: the texture of the canvas (or paper) and the type of brush, pencil, palette knife and so on being used.

However, in 2D digital art, it takes more of a conscious effort to create textures, and it usually requires the aid of texture photos.

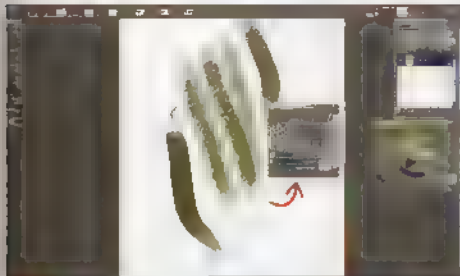
Although the photo technique is very effective, it does tend to be a dead giveaway that the image is digital. There's nothing wrong with artwork looking digital, but occasionally I like to create a digital image that has a 100 per cent traditional style. I find that the best way to achieve traditional-looking

textures is to use several different types of brushes in a single digital painting.

You can use Photoshop brushes to create this effect, but I find it's much more effective to use Painter, since it already has brushes that produce a traditional style and stroke.

I usually use three or four brushes with different types of grains and strokes. For example, I may use a Camelhair brush and go over it lightly with a Vine Charcoal or Pastel to get a natural-looking texture. I find myself constantly changing the settings of the Paper and Brushes as I work through a painting. Experiment with different brushes and papers and you'll be able to achieve traditional textures.

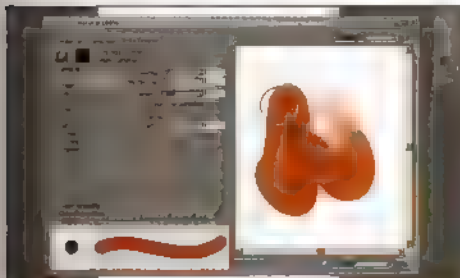
Step-by-step: Add realistic textures to a digital painting



1 This first example shows a charcoal/chalk-type brush. By adjusting the Paper settings in Painter you can control the size and contrast of the canvas grain. Experiment with these to get the proper texture you desire. You can also mix canvas surfaces such as Sandy Pastel Paper or just Basic Paper.



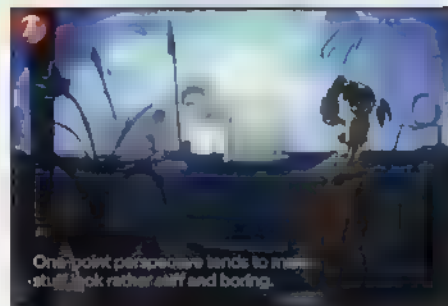
2 When you're using a Came hair Oil brush, you'll be able to make the bristles of the brush more prominent by adjusting the Feature settings. Showing the feathery bristles is one of the flaws of a real-world brush, which adds natural texture to traditional paintings.



3 You can go a step further and explore other setting options by clicking Window>Brush Creator in your top Painter menu. The Dab Type and Spacing settings in Brush Creator also allow for interesting results when creating customised traditional texture brushes.

Question

My artwork looks flat! I really want to use perspective but I don't know how. Can you help?
Flora Duncan, Scotland

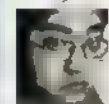


Artist's secret

BE INVOLVED IN YOUR OWN ART!

It's a common mistake to think of perspective as a technical skill. In reality, it's a way of seeing the world. When you look at a landscape, you're already using perspective. The key is to understand how it works and how to use it in your art. One-point perspective is the simplest, but it can be very effective. Two-point perspective is more complex, but it can create a sense of depth and realism. Three-point perspective is the most complex, but it can create a sense of height and scale. The key is to practice and experiment. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. That's how you learn.

Answer Saejin replies



It's easy! Try these steps and see if they fix your problem.

First, set a vanishing point. This is a little indicator that determines where your perspective lines will converge. To set a vanishing point, simply draw a horizontal line on your canvas (preferably somewhere in the middle) and draw a little dot on that line. Once you've set your vanishing point, draw straight lines radiating from the point. And there you have it! Play with it until you're comfortable with it. Drawing a grid in perspective will help.

What you've just tried is one-point perspective. While it's simple, it has a tendency to make your drawing look rather artificial and forced. If you want a natural-looking drawing with a solid perspective, try two-point perspective. (Three-point is better, but try getting used to two-point before moving on.) Start with a horizontal line (to set a horizon) then indicate one vanishing point along the horizon line within the canvas, and the other one outside the canvas (but still along the horizon). Make sure both vanishing points are far enough from one another to avoid forcing the perspective. That's it! Try drawing simple boxes along the perspective line to help you get used to it.



See how the gradual application of Dodge (pink arrows) can improve the overall effect of a halo.

Question
I've read that the Dodge tool shouldn't be used for highlighting. So where should I use it?

Roxy Alardice, Scotland

Answer
Marta replies



Saying that the Dodge tool is bad for highlighting is a rather huge generalisation – basically, it's better to avoid it than use it excessively, however there are some situations where Dodge comes in handy

As far as character painting goes, using Dodge is very dangerous and should generally be avoided. But there are two exceptions to this rule, first, the Dodge tool can help you underline the backlit flesh effect. To understand this, try it in real life by putting your hand against a light source – the thinner skin between the fingers is a much lighter and saturated colour – that is where you can use the Dodge tool

Secondly, Dodge can be used in an already highlighted hair base, especially for underlining thicker curls or creating the halo backlit hair effect as shown above. For this, use Dodge on the edges of the hair – first on a very low Opacity, then strengthening it as you go.

Dodge can also be used for embellishments to characters. It's absolutely perfect for shading metallic parts (armour, jewellery and so on). I usually paint some basic shades with my tools of choice, but add the essence by putting in some dodged strokes. If you want some extra realistic effects, use the Dodge tool with a hard round brush to give your metal some additional texture. You can also use Dodge to highlight thin and slippery textures, such as silk and similar material

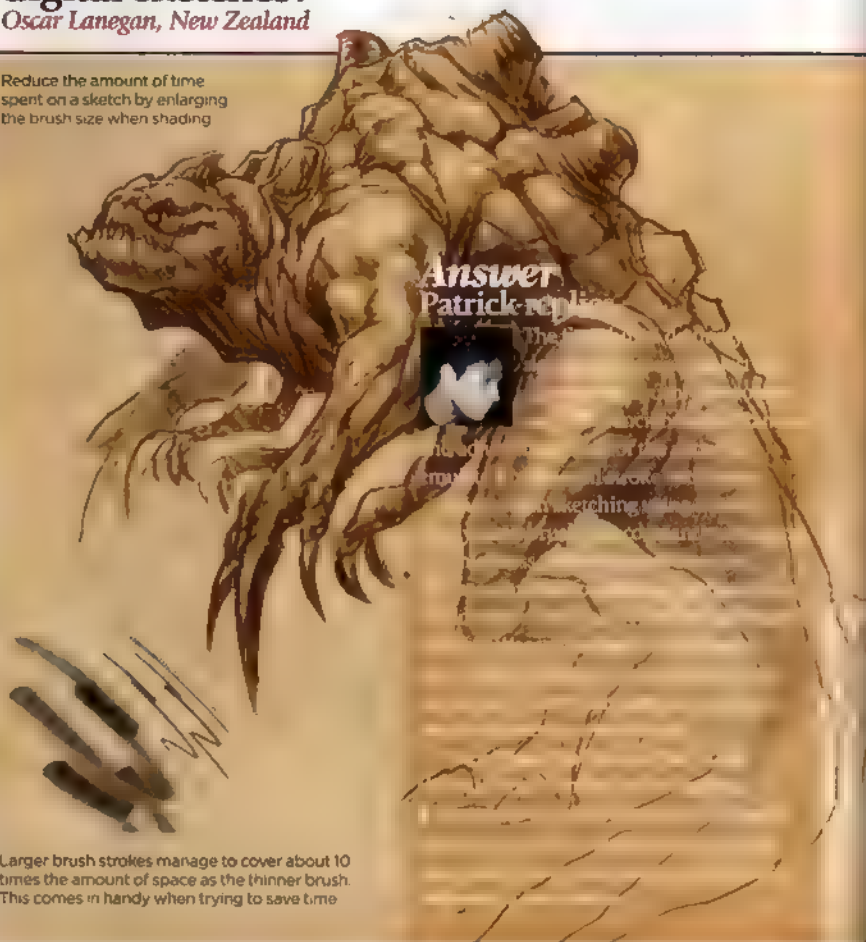


Dodging with a texture can bring out some wonderful colour-enhancing effects quite easily and be very efficient indeed

Question
Are there any effective tips for creating digital sketches?

Oscar Lanegan, New Zealand

Reduce the amount of time spent on a sketch by enlarging the brush size when shading



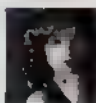
Answer
Patrick replies

Larger brush strokes manage to cover about 10 times the amount of space as the thinner brush. This comes in handy when trying to save time

Question
Can you give me some advice on drawing butterflies?

Luanne Blaney, US

Answer
Katarina replies



Butterflies are one of the most beautiful living creatures, a symbol of beauty and lightness. They look like flowers that have come to life and are flowing in the air,

creating a magical aura. I love painting butterflies, they add a romantic touch to even the most dramatic picture. In the following walkthrough I've used Painter X, though you can use your software of choice.

The endless variation of patterning that appears on butterfly wings is a natural artistic delight to behold



Question

Is there an easy way to adjust a Photoshop painting without starting from scratch?

Jess Coe, US



The Liquify tool acts like virtual Silly Putty, enabling you to make small or drastic adjustments to your image



Answer



Joel replies If you're looking to adjust the overall colour or contrast of an image, you can do so by going to the Image>

Adjustments dropdown and pick from a number of options. Curves enables you to adjust the tones and contrast of an image as well as the saturation and levels of your colour channels. Similarly, you can adjust the intensities of any individual colour using Saturation, or

use Levels to adjust the brightness, contrast, and tonal range

Two other great features in Photoshop are the Free Transform and Liquify tools. The Free Transform tool, which can be found under Edit>Free Transform, is an excellent way to skew or distort an image. Using the Liquify tool (Filter>Liquify) allows you to tweak parts of an image as well. Both of these tools allow you to make edits in a non-destructive manner.

One of the quickest ways to adjust the colours and levels in your image is by using the Curve tool

Artist's secret

CLONE, STAMP AND PATCH

Two new tools for editing images in Photoshop are the Clone Stamp and Patch tools found directly on the toolbar. Both enable you to clone or copy an existing area or an image on to any area that needs edit, no without having to paint over your work.

Step-by-step: Painting beautiful butterflies



1 I will paint a butterfly sitting on the trunk of a tree. To begin we need to sketch a base axis that runs parallel to the centre of the butterfly's

wings. The wings of the butterfly are symmetrical, so it's enough to paint one wing and simply copy and use its vertical reflection. I sketch the wing's form with a brush. A butterfly wing has a complex form which is split in two parts: its top part is the forewing, but the bottom part can vary.



2 When I paint butterflies I use my own imagination and combine butterflies that I've seen in real life. After the form is chosen, I

immediately start working with colour. I fill the wing with two basic colours. In this case we have turquoise and red. I paint the wing's main pattern using a soft large diameter brush with 20 per cent Opacity. It's okay if at the pattern boundaries the colours mix. It adds a nice rainbow effect



3 Now for the details. I paint small dots, swirls, borders, and marks on the wing to create a complex pattern. You shouldn't add too many new

colours at this point otherwise it will create a blot effect. I've added the tints of gold, pale and bright pink, and a hint of red and black, using a small diameter brush with round edges of 30-45 per cent Opacity. Then I copy the layer, create a reflection and modify it with the Transform tool.

Question

I'm new to digital art and I'd like to know more about shading faces. Can you help?

Molly George, England

Answer

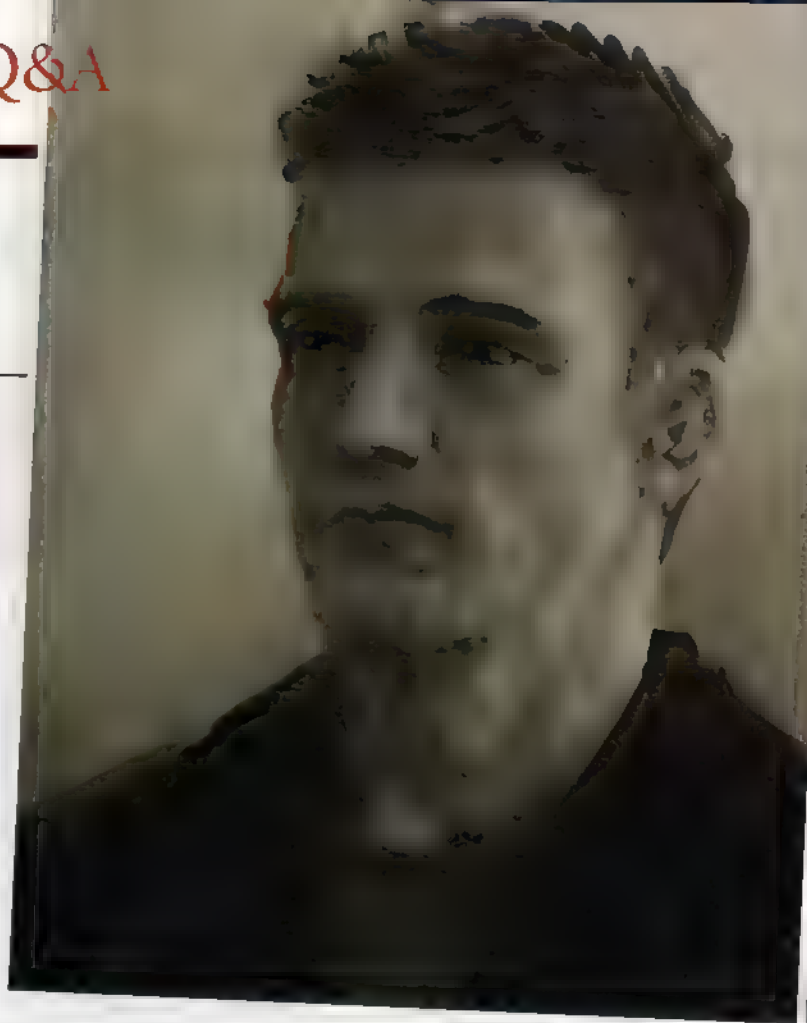
Marek replies



When I was younger, I always wondered why artists practised light and shadows on such simple objects as spheres, cylinders or boxes instead of on cool robots. Now I know that the simplicity of those objects enable an artist to fully understand how light casts shadow and then transform this knowledge to more complex shapes.

Let's take the head, for example. It's a complex object with different planes to consider, which can be really tricky to shade properly. But if you break it down into primitives it's much easier to grasp it in your mind. In the same way, divide complex scenes or objects into familiar shapes, and detail them after basic shading is properly done. This will help you greatly in your efforts to master the art of shading.

Contrary to initial impression, the human face is an exceedingly complex object, especially when it comes to an accurate portrayal of natural lighting and shadow.



Step-by-step: Adding shading detail to a plain face



- 1 Start with a basic shape - ideally a roundish cylinder attached to another cylinder (neck) attached to another roundish cylinder (body). Just to make this easier to understand, let's put a simple grid on our primitives and add some basic shading.



- 2 Now it's time for the basic features. The nose is basically a triangle sticking out in the middle of the face, while the eye sockets are those two symmetrical depressions. I usually paint those with a simple single brush stroke.



- 3 Let's shape this face more correctly. As you can see, I split the surface of my head into primitives that can be shaded more carefully. All of those features are parts of spheres and cylinders that are fairly easy to shade. Just check out the eye area - it looks like I put another sphere into the middle of my eye socket.



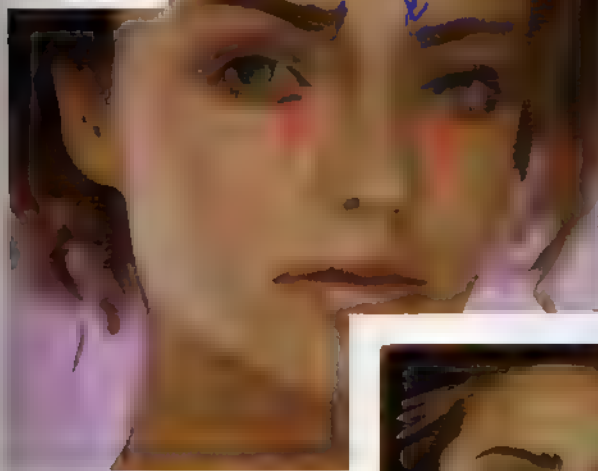
- 4 The next phase is to blend borders between those primitives and add some muscle and skin structure to make the face fuller. Don't forget to stick to the shading you did before, it's a good base for complex detailing. Finally, you add in all the details you need. With good base shading, this head should look pretty convincing by now.

Question

My character portraits always look very dull and artificial, just like dolls. How can I make them livelier?

Elodie Bovary, France

Every facial element needs its context – narrowed eyes are accompanied by narrowed eyebrows, resulting in skin and muscle tension on the forehead (blue and red arrows)



Detailing previously defined eyes automatically creates a wonderful focal point and lots of emotion (green and orange arrows)



Answer

Marta replies



The easiest way to add a spark to any character – whether you're painting a bust portrait or a full body piece – is the correct definition of the face. That's done on two levels – theoretical and technical, of which theory is the most important.

Firstly, you have to decide on your character's facial expression. It doesn't matter whether it's an extreme emotion like anger, sadness or happiness, or something more calm such as regret or apathy – you should always define every face with three elements: eyes with eyebrows, and the interaction of the mouth (not only the lips, but the whole jaw) with the face muscles – for example, grinning the teeth will strengthen the jaw line, opening the mouth will

cause the cheeks to change their convexity, and so on.

As far as technical pointers go, there are a few tricks that can really help to bring out that spark in your characters. Firstly, if you're going for a realistic effect, concentrate your efforts on the focal point area (which is usually the eyes). You can do this by adding an eye-catching element (such as vivid makeup) or by some thorough detailing.

In any case, always use the following tip when defining the iris, remember to add some colour spots on top of it to break the midtone colour but most importantly, paint in a small light reflex with the Airbrush tool. This is an incredibly easy task, but can result in amazing effects – be sure to compare the difference!

Question

What exactly is the Rule of Thirds?

John Paul Hope, Ireland



Answer

Joel replies



The Rule of Thirds is a classic compositional rule of art. The rule says that a scene be divided into three equal parts, both vertically and horizontally. Once divided, you can then use the intersecting points and spaces to frame the elements of your image in order to create a harmonic balance.

Using the rule can be an excellent method for creating tension and

energy within a scene. The rule recommends that points of interest in an image be placed along the vertical and horizontal division lines. This creates the most tension.

However, not all elements need to be placed along these lines or intersecting points in order to benefit from the rule. Elements placed close to the intersecting lines can still retain focus while adding balance to a scene.

Question

Is there a quick way to render a wet and slimy surface? Kieron Church, England

Answer

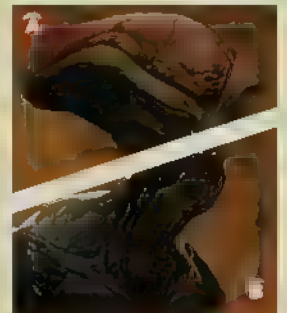
Francis replies



Wetness or slime affects the reflective properties of a surface by adding a thin translucent layer, reflecting light rays without scattering them. Some of the light rays penetrate the slime layer without bouncing back, reflecting off the surface underneath.

Try using Photoshop's Plastic Wrap filter (Filter>Artistic>Plastic Wrap). Copy your image into a new layer and run the filter on it. Filtering the entire image has the effect of flattening out the image; mitigate this by erasing parts of the filtered layer to remove the Plastic Wrap effect to correspond to the light/shadow scheme in your image.

Painting hot white highlights at a few select points can also enhance an applied Plastic Wrap effect (A).

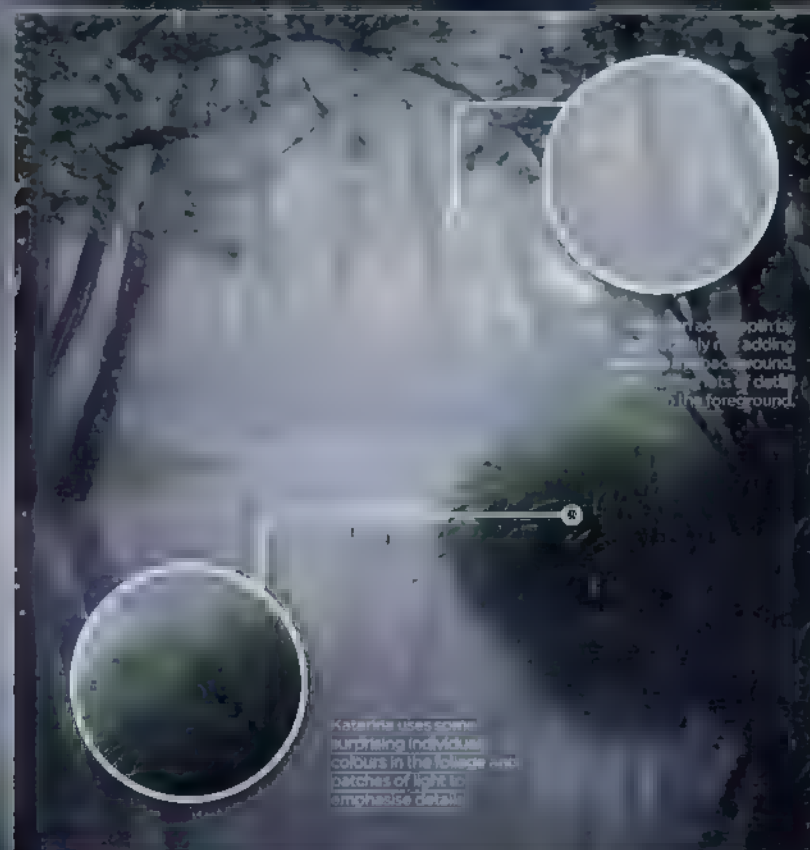


Selective use of the Plastic Wrap filter can help convey a sense of wet or slimy surfaces (B).

Question

When I paint a forest, it always ends up looking dark and flat. How do I lift it, and give it a mystical air?

Kate Dean, England



Katarina uses some surprising individual colours in the foliage and patches of light to emphasise detail.

Katarina replies

How often do we ask ourselves what it is that makes a painting mysterious and what can create a magical aura? I believe the most important part is the environment.

As I love to paint realistic portraits I use the surroundings to create the effect of fantastic unreality. Most often it's in the nature – the mysterious woods, valleys and gloomy bushes. You can turn an ordinary landscape into a fairytale scene, you just need to use some techniques and tricks.

I paint plain landscapes, but instead of the usual green for the grass and foliage I use different tints of blue, violet and pink. Usually I use cold tints – they're better suited to creating the mystical feeling.

filling the painting with air and adding depth to it. I paint a rough of the future forest, sketch the perspective and place the basic elements. At this stage I choose the colours and mix them on the palette. In this case it's dark blue, turquoise, pinkish blue, and pink. I use an Oil brush and a Wet Acrylic brush with a large diameter and a maximum Opacity of 30 per cent.

I thoroughly detail the foreground and ignore the background. This adds the effect of depth to the painting. I detail separate blades and leaves and add patches of light. Finally, I paint sparkling glowworms, chaotically distributed over the painting. I use the large diameter Airbrush with 45 per cent Opacity.

Question

Any tips on rendering semi-transparent solid materials?

Rory Gardener, England



To render the semi-transparent pod on this mite's back convincingly shade the pod so it's round and smooth (A), then add refracted light inside of it (B).



Answer Marek replies



When painting something new, use a real world object as a reference. For semi-transparent solid materials, try a thick liquid – such as amber – that will scatter light that passes through it.

The organic container pod on this cybernetic mite's back will be semi-transparent. I start by rendering it, as with any other glossy material, with full Opacity. Split your rendering into stages to avoid getting lost in following light and shadow.

Shade the mite's back so it looks round and smooth, then add refracted light inside its sphere. The brightest point of refracted light would be symmetrical to the light direction, so if there's light coming from the top, the hotspot would be on the bottom. Think of it as working like a sort of concave mirror.

The next stage depends on the clarity level of the material you want to render. If it's fuzzy and milky like mine, some of those inside speculars would get blurry thanks to material inner-light scattering, but if you want your material fully transparent, keep those hotspots sharp and in high contrast.



For best colours inside the semi-transparent solid materials use different colour blending modes, the Soft and Hard light modes are the best. Also, Overlay can do the trick. Don't be afraid to experiment with these tools!

Next month
ON SALE: 26 August
Do you start with the
lighting on an image, or
wait until the end?

Question

How should I go about painting scenery from a rough to a finished scene?

Matt Williams, Wales

Answer



I start scenery with a rough and outline the elements I want in the piece. Sometimes things get added, but usually the rough won't be far off. I lay out all the buildings, beginning with those in the foreground. I try not to have one building dominate others too much.

Next, the colours. I use a Multiply layer so I can lay them down without interfering with the rough lines. When I've got the colour roughly right, I develop it further using a mixture of Overlay and Multiply layers. I usually need to tweak the colour as I go along.

Then it's detailing. Even at this stage, I go back to roughing and/or colour tweaking to fix and patch things. When I've finished detailing the piece it's usually done, though I often favour using Brightness/Contrast and Colour Balance for final tweaking.

Step-by-step: Create realistic-looking scenery

1 Start off with laying out all the people, buildings and any other elements necessary for your scenery. Unless you want to have a dominant subject on the scene, keep a balance between all the elements by not placing a large object in the dead centre, for example.

2 Once the rough is done, move on to filling in colours. Use a Multiply layer for this purpose as it doesn't interfere with the line art below. When you have a rough approximation of the colour you want for the piece, develop it further, using a mixture of Overlay and Multiply layers.

3 I almost never get the colour I want on the first go. Painting is a ongoing process and you're often forced to make new decisions as you draw. Keep tweaking the colour while painting details. You can even try Photoshop's Colour Balance and Brightness and Contrast options.

Got a digital art problem? Post it to the forums on www.imaginefx.com or email help@imaginefx.com

or visit Artist Q&A, www.imaginefx.com, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW

LOBO

Could anyone else have painted Lobo, the bounty hunting anthro, with quite so much flair?



WALT DISNEY PICTURES PRESENTS
A MICHAEL BAY FILM
THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS
CASTING BY JUDY KOSOVE
COSTUME DESIGNER JUDY KOSOVE
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY JUDY KOSOVE
PRODUCTION DESIGNER JUDY KOSOVE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JUDY KOSOVE
PRODUCED BY JUDY KOSOVE
SCREENPLAY BY JUDY KOSOVE
DIRECTED BY JUDY KOSOVE

Simon Bisley

The living legend takes time out at the busy Bristol Comic Con to speak to ImagineFX

Simon Bisley is a magnet for unlikely stories: he used to be a pro wrestler; he was sent back from art school because they couldn't teach him anything; he sneaks cockles into his cover art. The stories have one thing in common: their extreme nature. This is something Simon does his best to justify at every turn.

One thing is certain – WWE or not, Simon has had the world of comic books in a headlock ever since he power-slammed an unsuspecting public with his ABC Warriors in the late 1980s. His work is as often crude and humorous as it is muscular and visceral, and he's not shy of the darkness just below the surface of things, particularly the heroic.

It's true he's built like a large silverback gorilla, but there's another striking similarity between the comic book legend and the giant mountain ape: he's very difficult to pin down. Following a failed attempt at Bristol Comic Con 2007 to coax him into a telephone interview, IFX went in force to the 2008 event.

The interview took place over two hours on the Reed Comics stand on the final day of the Bristol event. It's a not a two-hour interview; that's just how long it took, the questions gingerly inserted between Simon's bouts of playful banter with an adoring public – signing, sketching and offering advice to anyone who asked, his generosity of spirit matched only by the power of a third-day hangover.

Artist PROFILE

Simon Bisley



Simon Bisley arrived on the comic book scene with some drama when he pencilled the return of the ABC Warriors for 2000 AD in 1987. Since then, his trademark ability to bring the ugly brutality of superhero existence to the fore has earned him huge respect, with strips such as Lobo, Pull Circle and Sláine proving his technical as well as stylistic ability.

www.simonbisleygallery.com



Figure 1. The effect of the concentration of the *Agaricus bisporus* spores on the growth of *Agaricus bisporus* and *Agaricus bisporus* spores on the growth of *Agaricus bisporus*.

meant to be an artist?

I did enjoy drawing, just messing around.
Now I have no spare time so I don't draw.

Just do it straight off.

I don't bother with the whole laborious process of planning out [an image]. I just do it straight off

FX: Where did you go to study art?
Did you attend art college?



Q&A PAT MILLS

The creator of 2000 AD talks of his collaborations with Bisley

How did you first meet Simon?
I was 16 years old and in high school. They
had a "no dating" rule, so I was
mad. I took a picture of him and sent it to
my friend. She said, "00:00 AM, 1 Feb."
I was like, "This is what I look like."

Were you surprised when you saw the
 first — and only — live character you
 had ever seen?

"No one is an Anglo-American, not
 appearing as if he were. I have been
 in the United States with No one
 since the mid-1960s, and I've seen a lot of

...and a little credit for the jobs you've gotten in, such as ABC, *Walker* and *Shane*?

...a highly intelligent, talented artist and has a deep, even profound, understanding of storytelling, despite giving an opposite impression!

—do obviously work well together
—there's a reason for that

I think we both have a passion for our work. Some writers are tame and just follow hot artists' instructions. That's not in my personality and I think the resulting bit of magic between a writer and an artist also helps.

Do you have a favourite piece of Biology
 that you work together? Could
 you say why it's your favourite?

Yes, Simon gave me a page from *Slaine*. The Horned God showing Udo following another dwarf down an alleyway. It's extremely atmospheric.



PULLING IT TOGETHER



SLÁINE

Simon Bisley battles The Horned God

By 1989 Simon had really hit his stride. His style had become more polished, and painterly, but he still maintained that trademark feel for the casually brutal. There was also a loyal and steadily growing fanbase. It was time for another Pat Mills creation – Slaine.

Dealing with the battle between Slaine's patron – the Earth Goddess – and the evil Slough Feg, The Horned God was a particularly strong script and Simon more than rose to the challenge. Alongside the classic struggle between good and evil, Mills added notes of redemption and becoming which chimed brilliantly with Simon's ability to paint sadness next to straight-up violence with dragons.

By the end of the story, Slaine, something of an uncouth character at times, rose to regal status in old Ireland. By the end of the run Simon had achieved a kind of notoriety too, his fully painted panels testifying to an artist with great talent at his disposal.

Slaine was particularly well-suited to this lavish treatment and the buying public responded well, but what really captured the imagination was the way Simon's detailed renderings retained something of the obvious enjoyment he took in his work, a talent he retains to this day.

for a degree and not so but I just never bothered turning up. That was in Swindon. I just never considered doing art for a career. I knew people did comics but I didn't know how to get into it. My choices were either go back to college or join the RAF or something. I don't remember too much about the rest of it.

IFX: So what did you have to do to get your big break?

SB: A friend from the year above me at school was working for a car magazine – Autocar, you know – as an art director and he showed my stuff to a few people around London: Kerrang! magazine and 2000 AD. I had a series of interviews with them and that's how it all started.

[The first thing I did was the ABC Warriors. I always used to listen to this sort of stuff [points at metal CD artwork held out by fan] when I was painting them.]

IFX: Did 2000 AD appreciate what you were doing or did they make demands?

SB: Are you serious? I was doing some robotic stuff. I was into cyborgs and stuff. Everyone knows this. There's nothing further to say, really.

[At this point, we put the interview on hold for a few moments, as Simon takes a short break for signing and discussion with some French and Irish fans.]

IFX: You were talking about 2000 AD.

SB: Yeah. When I was small, people always wanted to work on comic books but it's like an actor in a movie, they never imagine being an actor and working on a movie.

IFX: These days are different, though, aren't they?

SB: On yeah. They can do their own comics these days on the computer. Anyone can do it. It's as easy as hell, innit?

IFX: You've mentioned the death of comic books before?

SB: I came along just as the whole computer thing was coming up. There was a dip but I had already made my name by then. That dip was difficult for people to get into comics. There was a hell of a dip... a huge lull. What caused that?

It was huge with Extreme and Wildstorm – they were selling in their millions, then it just dropped off over night. [Todd McFarlane and all that lot.]

Simon Reed interjects: That was about 1995. They did the Clone War saga with Spider-Man. Marvel went into receivership. All the best people were picked up for films and games and comics were just left with the... Well, the quality really dropped off. **SB:** I was getting royalties from Lobo. I was getting more from royalties than I got for the jobs. Then nothing.

INTERVIEW

Simon's finely racial rendering of the ABC

SPREAD THE WORD!



SLÁINE: HORNED GOD COVER

Simon Bisley's heavily muscled character, complete with a Frazetta-esque colour palette, gave Slaine a new look.



Q&A SIMON REED

The writer and Reed Comics guru reveals Bisley's strengths

What projects have you worked on with Simon Bisley?

So far - Full Circle (first and second series) and Thicker Than Blood #1 to #3. I have also commissioned five animal paintings on canvas to be displayed in galleries for fine art exhibitions across Europe, and a series of paintings and drawings for a forthcoming artbook of Simon Bisley's work.

How did you first meet?

It was a very strange experience, as it was a phone call right out of the blue from Simon asking a question. I didn't know who it was and this guy just asked me a question. I said, "Who is this?" and he said, "Simon Bisley, who do you think?" as if I should know. I nearly fell over. Anyway, we have been friends since.

Why was Simon right for Full Circle and Thicker Than Blood?

Simon is one of the best artists in the industry because he is able to convey so much energy in his work and understands the positions of characters, where the muscles clench and relax and underlying skeletal structure. This is particularly important in conflict situations, so with warring tribes in Full Circle Simon was the perfect choice. As for Thicker Than Blood, Simon was always a great fan of Mike Ploog's work and considered it an honour to paint his work, which shows the diversity of Simon's abilities - as it looks amazing!

How would you describe the quality that Simon brings to his characters?

Simon said once, "I may not be the best artist but I know how to make characters look cool." That says it all.

What is his influence on the rest of the comic book world?

He's seen as an example to follow nowadays, with so few artists who can draw and paint. Computer colouring can compromise comics in so many ways, as artists see it as a way of short-cutting their work and then touch up on computers later during colouring.

Is there a character you would love to see him take on?

Batman! Please, DC, let him do a full Batman story again like the classic celebration from 1990.

IFX: You really put your mark on whatever you draw. You really own the characters, don't you?

SB: I've always been that way. Always just gone pretty much my own way with anything I've done. No-one dictates to you a particular look. They can be a bit finicky.

IFX: I like the way you look at the ABC Warriors I did - completely different to the way the guys before me were doing it. More robotic and mechanical. Mine was more biomechanical. More fleshy metal. I wish I'd done it more like real robots. I don't know why I did it the way I did.

SB: I never consider it. I don't think comics. I don't come here to buy them. I'm not really aware of representing myself. I just don't think anything of it.

IFX: When I go to a comic convention I just want to party and have a good laugh and you know...

SB: I like tackling characters and putting my stamp on them. That's always been my forte. I still don't think I'm a really great comic book artist. And I'm certainly not a great inker.

IFX: Really?

SB: My strength is just making the characters look cool and work somehow. I manage to put a bit of life in there.

IFX: I do like pencilling the work. No, I really enjoy pencilling the work but I hate inking it afterwards. It pisses me off. It seems stupid. I've already drawn this once.

IFX: There's another brief distraction as a representative of The Gnomon Workshop, talks to Simon about the possibility of making a DVD of Bisley's working practice. IFX loves this idea...

IFX: Teaching the Bisley techniques is that possible?

SB: Yeah. You can explain it. For example, weight and its distribution on the body. Being aware of how the body works. Where the weight is coming from. The way you use line and so on.

IFX: So can you teach that?

SB: Yes you can. I might do a whole picture



so you can see the weight of something
it just comes to me

IFX: Do you try to express something
different these days to when you
first set out?

SB: No, it's the same... but different

IFX: You look like you
get really into it

SB: Look at all the
characters. They all look the same. Batman
I like doing Batman because he's easy. He's
immediately striking. Everyone loves
Batman. I used to love Slaine

IFX: Are you surprised when people like
different pieces of work to you?

SB: Nothing surprises me. I'm not
surprised by anything

IFX: Your heroes always have a certain
look about them: they always appear
troubled. Was that intentional?

SB: What do you mean?

IFX: They're not the wholesome, toothy
champions of the early comic books.

SB: It's always going to be a bit of a
struggle isn't it? Being a hero can't be that
easy. It's not, is it? Obviously not.

SB: I don't do them like that. I tend to see the
ugliness in everything. Or the beauty in the

I try to parody
everything I do.
Sometimes I want
to push the boat
out and just
irritate people

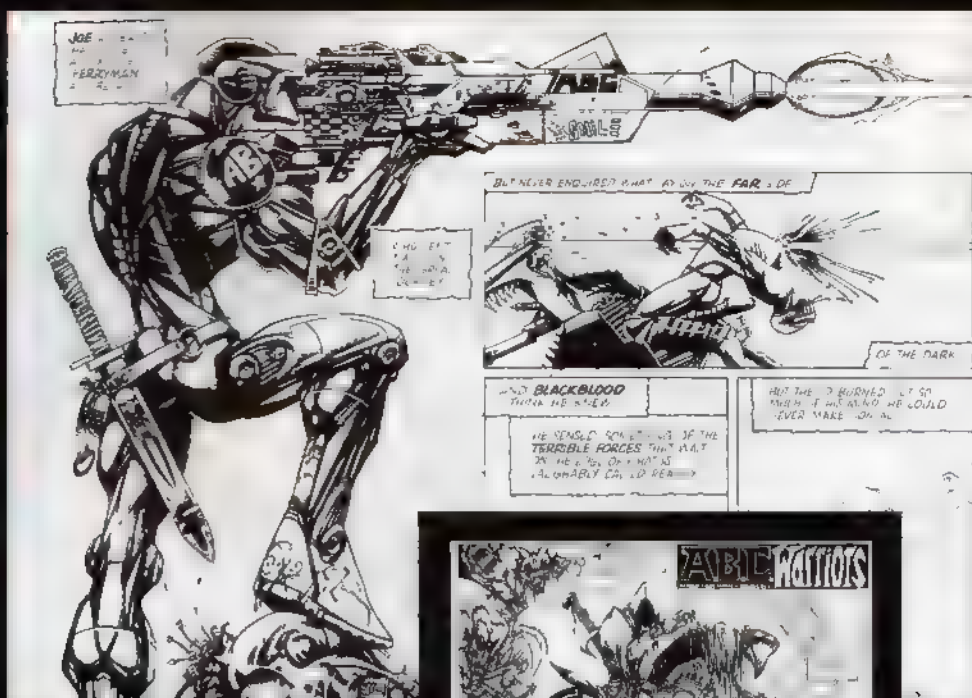
ugliness. I try to parody everything I do.
Sometimes I want to push the boat out and
just irritate people. I always put the human
into the characters I do.

IFX: And humour. There's always a
certain touch of humour in your
characters, too.

SB: Oh, you can't not can you? It's in the
nature, isn't it? They can absolutely be a bit
serious. It's strange isn't it, because comics
are meant to be funny aren't they? It's why
they used to call them the funnies!

IFX: Okay, thanks Simon.

SB: That's not it, is it?



JOE PINEAPPLES

Joe Pineapples was the ultimate assassin, and was
Hammerstein's number two in the ABC Warriors.

DEADLOCK

Another of Simon's images from the ABC Warriors series,
this time Deadlock, Grand Wizard of the Knights Martial.



ABC WARRIORS

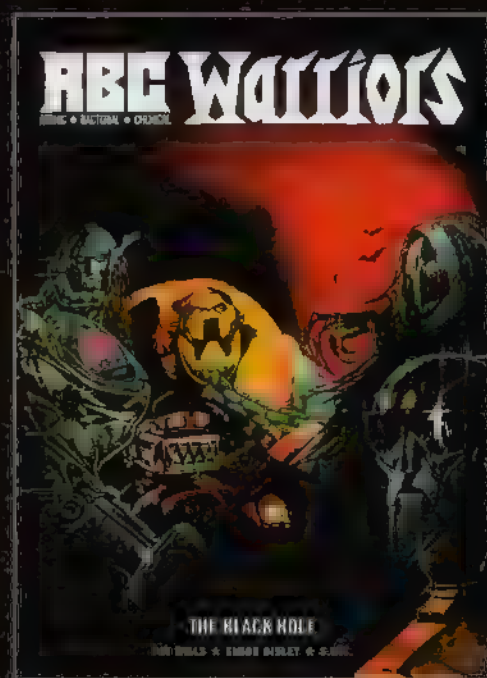
The Black Hole was the perfect showcase
for Simon's talents

Atomic, Bacterial and Chemical. The
ABC Warriors are immune. Seven very
different robots sent on a mission to
counterbalance the insanity of Terminus,
the evil empire. Simon Bisley was
perfect for this story and writer Pat Mills
recognised that immediately.

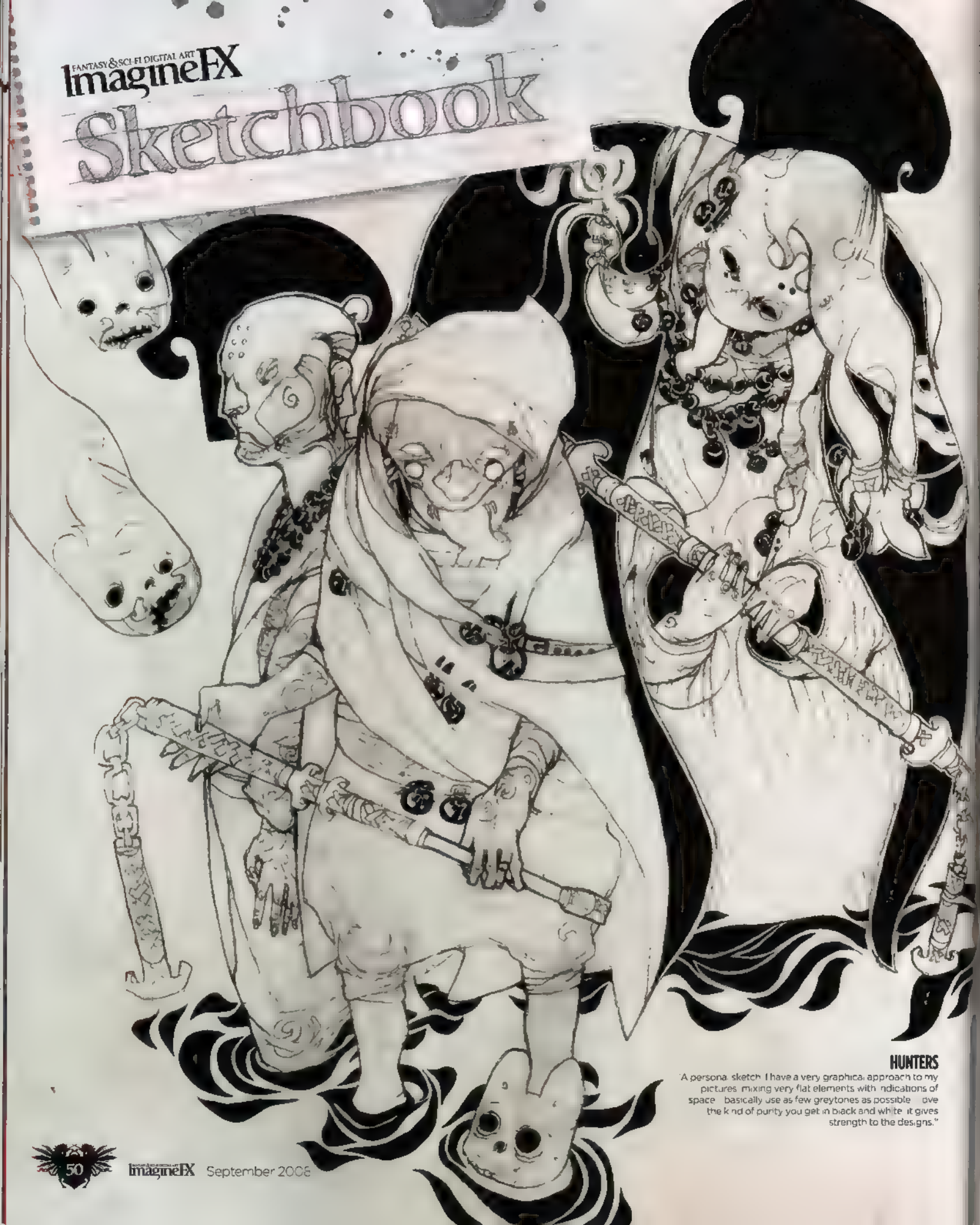
A major story for 2000 AD, The
Warriors had already been pencilled by
some big names. Following in the
footsteps of Kevin O'Neill, Brendan
McCarthy and Mike McMahon can't have
been easy for a new artist but even a
 cursory look at Simon's bold shapes and
dramatic lines suggest someone
immediately at home with his subject.

Simon shared the work with 2000
AD irregular SMS, their styles working
together brilliantly. SMS handled layout
and scenery well, building on the work
of Kevin O'Neill, but Simon started as he
meant to go on - defining characters
with a deadeye for detail. There's Joe
Pineapples, the assassin, Hammerstein
the leader, and the inimitable brute
Mongrol, but it's Deadlock, Grand
Wizard of the Knights Martial, who you
always suspected he had a soft spot for.

Pat Mills's writing style works
perfectly for Simon on this story, with
his love of detail, strong character
development and very deep black



Sketchbook



HUNTERS

A persona sketch. I have a very graphical approach to my pictures, mixing very flat elements with indications of space. Basically use as few greytone as possible. Give the kind of purity you get in black and white. It gives strength to the designs."

Emmanuel Malin

We delve into the creepy and darkly comical sketchbook of the French illustrator

PROFILE

Emmanuel Malin



Emmanuel Malin is a freelance illustrator and fine artist based in Paris. He studied architectural and medical illustration, before dedicating himself to his personal work. Mostly, his personal projects involve drawing for comics, magazines and animation. His work has also appeared in the prestigious Spectrum annuals.

www.emmanuelmalin.com

IMPERIAL GUARD

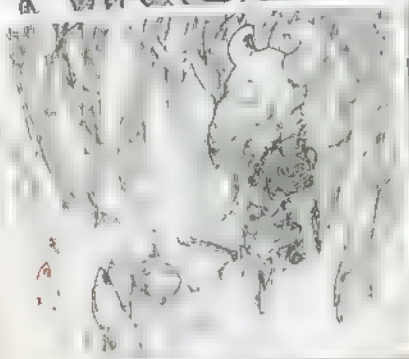
"This picture was done for practising my black and white skills. These little flying fellows are tiny but deadly unlike their big clumsy companion"

SPACE GIRLY

"Half kid, half woman, she still has no name..."

"Most of the time I don't know where I'm going, I love drawing by instinct"

Sketchbook



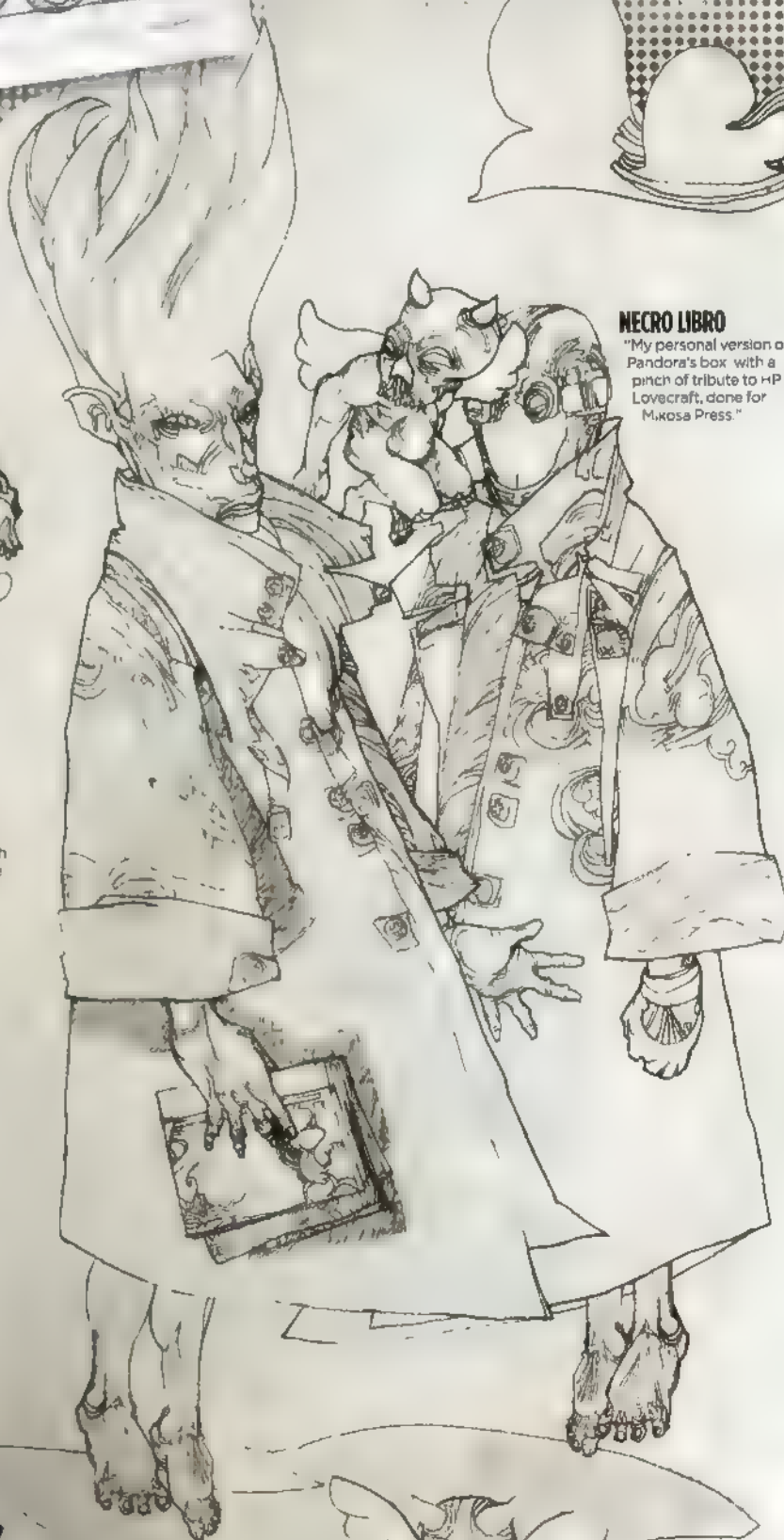
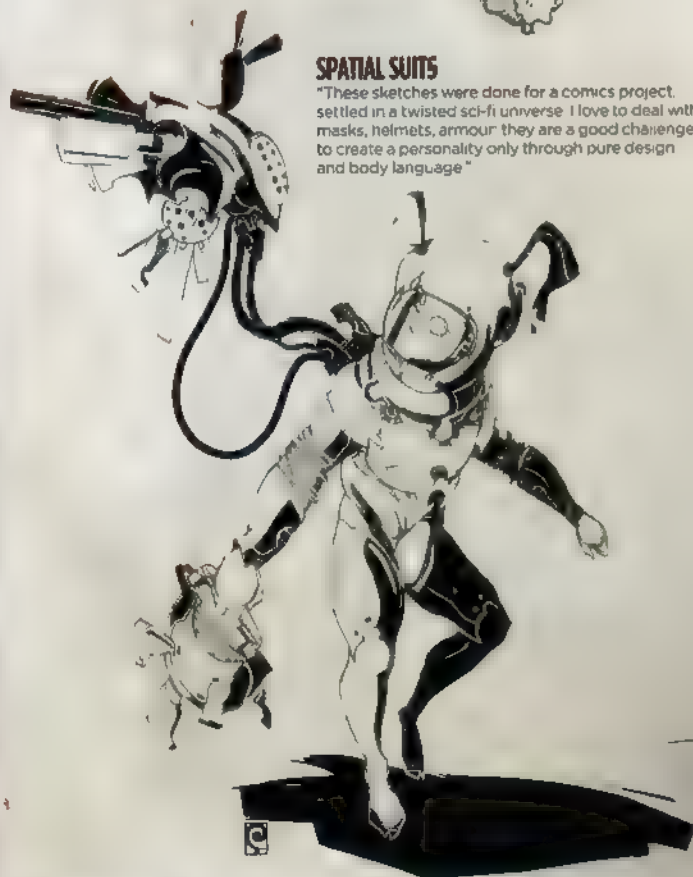
THE LECTURE

"A Ram God giving a lecture to some worshippers and birds. Once again, you can see I had fun drawing some bones and organs!"



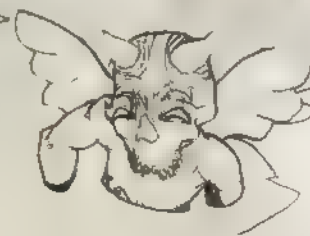
SPATIAL SUITS

"These sketches were done for a comics project, settled in a twisted sci-fi universe. I love to deal with masks, helmets, armour: they are a good challenge to create a personality only through pure design and body language."



NECRO LIBRO

"My personal version of Pandora's box with a pinch of tribute to HP Lovecraft, done for Mixosa Press."



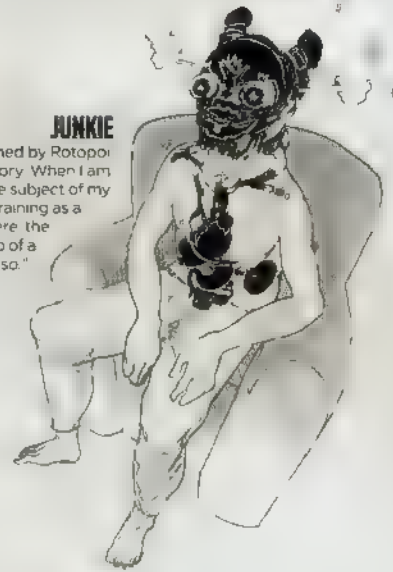


FAMILY

"A sketch on the theme of education, playing a bit with scales - I love to draw the line work and then bring it to Photoshop for inking. To me, inking is a bit like sculpting. I add black, then remove some of it, add some more, until I get the right balance. It's a very intuitive way to work and I never know where I am going until it is done, or until I decide it is done."

JUNKIE

A sketch for the Dolor issue 1 published by Rotopoi Press. It's part of a four-picture story. When I am given enough freedom with the subject of my sketches, I like to allude to my training as a medical and scientific illustrator. Here, the story about the last and deadly trip of a junkie was a good occasion to do so."



"My purpose is to make people react and participate. If I show a picture to someone who starts making his own story from it, then it is a success to me"



© Sega/Amé Creative Assembly

THE HOLY INNOCENCE

The cover image for a French art magazine, *La Mer Gelee*. Done in Photoshop, Michael used photographs of old walls for the dirt layers.



Artist Portfolio MICHAEL KUTSCHE

PROFILE

Michael Kutsche



AGE: 30

FAVOURITE ARTISTS:

Ludwig Freud,
Jenny Saville, Chris
Cunningham, Moeblus,

Craig Mullins

SOFTWARE USED: Painter

Photoshop

AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE: Four

hours to three days

WEBSITE: www.mikobornik.de

He may be a rising star in the world of digital painting, but **Michael Kutsche** sees himself more as a problem solver than a traditional fantasy artist.

Berlin's reputation as a centre for creativity continues to grow. Studio space is cheap, galleries and exhibitions are showing new work all the time, the music scene is thriving, and some districts boast incredible street art. Michael Kutsche is one of the residents who's not only finding constant inspiration in the city, but is also gaining a reputation as one of the best digital painters in Europe.

Going through Michael's portfolio, one of the most striking things is the variety of

work he creates. From robots and toys to caricatures and highly detailed character work, he never conforms to one style or subject matter. Yet he always creates images of stunning quality.

"Maybe if I had a certain comic style I would just search my mind and say, 'You put this form and this form and this form together,'" Michael says. "But my approach is to take an hour and get inspired by some pictures on the internet, and from my books, or maybe go to a museum or an exhibition. When I feel inspired, I just

MICHAEL KUTSCHE



ENDZEIT

This apocalyptic vision is a personal work, completed in Photoshop and Painter.

THE WALL

A personal project that Michael completed a few years back. "I've always been a fan of those sci-fi movies with a realistic feel," Michael observes.



WATTBOTT

This aquatic robot's just caught a fish. But is the fish for food, or is it a weapon? Done in Photoshop.

go. Every task, no matter if it's a task from a client or from myself, is a problem and each problem has a solution. It's not approaching it from the same direction; stylistically, it's more like evolution."

RACE FOR THE PRIZE

One of Michael's latest personal pieces is *The Boxer*, a skilfully rendered image of a man with a human face and body, but the ears of a pig. The surreal idea of combining something human with something animal was a concept Michael wanted to explore, while at the same time the attention to detail and realism in the image gives the character a great deal of believability. He imagined the pigman as a character in an animation, interacting with real humans.

Every task, no matter if it's a task from a client or by myself, it's a problem and each problem has a solution

"Most of the time I use a pencil and a brush pen," Michael says. "It's like working with ink and Japanese calligraphy. It has a cool flow with it and it's good for sketching. You can make big black areas quickly. That was the first step, then I took it over to Corel Painter for 95 per cent of the job, and the last five per cent in Photoshop."

Michael can't always let his creativity run wild. He does a lot of illustration work with big clients in the advertising and computer games industries. Lately, he's

been doing some promotional artwork for The Creative Assembly, a British games developer for Sega.

It all started when the company needed imagery for the game *Medieval II*. They'd intended to use a 3D artist, but the three-week turnaround would have meant missing their print deadline.

Michael stepped in with his far faster digital painting skills and has since done artwork for *Empire: Total War* and *Viking: Battle for Asgard*.



“Most of the time I use a pencil and a brush pen. It has a cool flow and it’s good for sketching”

VIKING: BATTLE FOR ASGARD

This evil warrior queen, created digitally in high resolution, needed to stand up to scrutiny

One of Michael's most stunning recent jobs was to illustrate the box artwork and other promotional visualisations for the game Viking: Battle for Asgard. The image Hel, for instance, depicts one of the game's evil characters and was created at very high resolution to be used on cardboard standees. It was also painted digitally, except the chain-whip, which was rendered in 3D.

Michael's background is actually in 3D. Straight out of school and without studying art, he worked as an intern at a 3D animation company near Frankfurt. As his career has progressed he's moved away from the technical discipline to focus on the more creative side – concept art, illustration and digital painting. Ironically, his first work for

The Creative Assembly was to replace 3D rendered work they used to commission. His digital paintings are stunningly realistic, without all the time-consuming set-up that goes into a 3D image.

BIG GUY, THUNDER AND MAESTRO

Big Guy, Thunder and Maestro were a design done as a toy design for a clothing company called Homeboy. Michael created the whole of this image in Photoshop.



AGENCY CHARACTERS

This image was done entirely in Painter X. "It was created for an ad campaign for the Art Directors' Club Berlin," explains Michael. "The task was to caricature the typical advertisers from the left Art Director, Creative Director and Copywriter."



"The games industry gigs with Creative Assembly have led to work in another area in which Michael excels — concept art. "After posting this stuff on CGTalk, a company from Seoul, South Korea, contacted me," he explains. "They were doing a first-person shooter with the Unreal engine. It was pretty cool because they saw this cover artwork stuff and they said, 'Hey, we need some concept art.' I'm doing some stuff for them but I'm not able to post it right now. Production will take another year or so."

Michael's approach when it comes to character design is firstly to find inspiration. He likes to get a feeling for the world he's creating the characters for, often looking at movies and comics. He

"You have to think about the world characters live in and the story of their lives"

finds the work of video director Chris Cunningham particularly inspiring. Michael's aim is not necessarily to make good-looking images, but to define and describe the character. The concept art needs to be the basis of the connection between the character and the audience.

HIGH CONCEPT

At the moment, Michael's working on concepts for a movie. Details are under wraps, but he's been able to share his approach with us. "The movie project I'm working on right now is pretty cool because it's a very surreal world," he says. "You could go and make anything you want, but you have to do something that the audience connects to. If everything is fantasy and it's

MICHAEL KUTSCHE



VIKING

Another promotional painting from Viking: Battle for Asgard. Michael has successfully captured the feel of the game in this image.

SKARIN

Skarin is the main character in Viking: Battle for Asgard. Michael created him in a very high resolution, because he was used for life-sized prints.



“You close your eyes and you have this connection to the subconscious. That’s where the best artwork comes from”

not believable then I think it’s not going to connect with the emotions of the audience. You have to think about the world the characters live in and the story of their lives. What do they do all day, how do they feel?”

Computer game box art and concept art are both areas where Michael has to work from a brief. All his skills are called on, but not always all his creativity. Yet occasionally a job comes along where he has the chance to work almost as if he were doing a personal project. One fascinating

example is a cover he did for the French art magazine, *La Mer Gelée* (see page 55). A friend asked him to create an image based on the theme of loss.

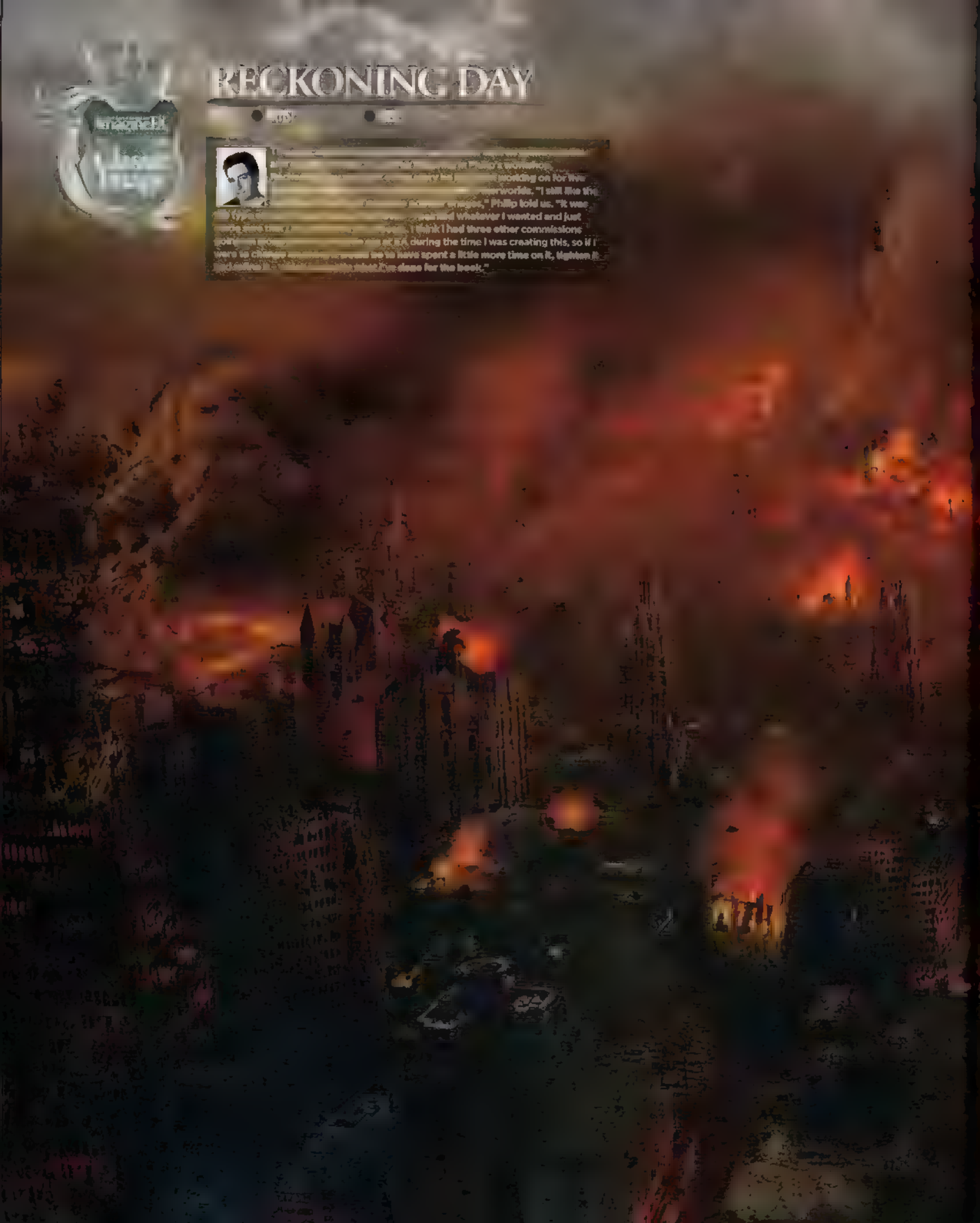
“The first thing that came to mind was long arms that wanted to grab something and not lose it,” he says. “It wasn’t like a job. There are some approaches that I would call more artistic.”

“The professional way of working is more of a logical kind of thing. The artistic is more like you close your eyes and you have this connection to the subconscious. That’s where the best artwork comes from because you don’t have to restrict yourself, you just have a word, one theme in your mind or a feeling, or you listen to a song that you like.”

RECKONING DAY



Philip K. Dick was working on for five
"I still like the
"Philip told us. "It was
"I think I had three other commissions
"during the time I was creating this, so if I
"we'd have spent a little more time on it, maybe it
"what we done for the book."





EXPOSE *Traditional*

SHOWING THE THREE TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



Ian Miller

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.ian-miller.org

EMAIL: whizzopost@ntlworld.com

MEDIA: Ink, watercolour, airbrush

JOB: Illustrator/artist



Even at 62 years old, Ian's artistic awakening in childhood is still very much with him: "On my sixth birthday I was given a set

of 12 coloured pencils with a different colour at each end," he says. "The vivid quality of the colours was quite startling and even now, all these years on, I can still remember the excitement they aroused in me."

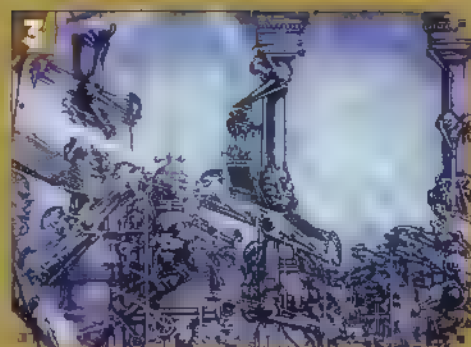
"I sometimes describe my imagery as stills from a lost film," he adds. "Mute, frozen, fragments, waiting for a lead."

1 HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC EAST RIFT

2x14in pen/ink on illustration board

Taken from the film script *Hollywood Gothic*, for the opening scene of a rolling view of desolation across Los Angeles. The specific scene description read: "Wiltshire Boulevard/Ruins of Academy building/basement/film archives. Fire wind and rain spike the landscape. A siren wails continuously somewhere in the distance."





2 WASPS

24x18 in watercolour/ink on illustration board

"Wasps are a recurring theme," says Ian. "I don't know why, although I did have several up my trouser leg while climbing an apple tree once!"

3 COMPUTER DRIVEN

12x14 in ink on illustration board

This is Ian's take on a computer driven by steam, for which he was awarded British Science Fiction Association's best artwork in 1991. "A very pleasant surprise," says Ian of his victory.

4 HOLLYWOOD DRAGONS

16x12 in pen/ink on illustration board

Another image from Ian's film, *Hollywood Gothic*, which saw these creatures formed out of what remained of a decimated Los Angeles. If you look closely, you can see recognisable objects making up the dragon.



1 Mark Romanoski

LOCATION US

WEB www.mark-romanoski.com

EMAIL mark@mark-romanoski.com

MEDIA Oil and acrylic paint

JOB Illustrator/painter



Shortly after graduating from Kean University with a BFA in illustration, Mark Romanoski met legendary

illustrator Tim Hildebrandt. Tim helped Mark to learn two of his most important lessons: "I had a lot to learn, and nothing would come easy."

Mark recalls Tim telling him that perseverance must be a God-given talent because so few people have it. Listening to this sage advice, Mark set out to refine his talents and, as luck would have it, was introduced to illustrator Joe Devito. He taught Mark an academic approach to illustration, and convinced him to enroll at the Arts Students League in New York. Mark concluded his studies at the DuCret School of Arts in Plainfield, New Jersey.

As a professional illustrator, Mark's work blends a love of illustration with a love of the subject matter. His clients include Warner Brothers Studios, Universal Studios and DC Comics.

1 THE DRAGON CROSS

35x22 inches on board

This piece was done for Big City Comics, for a tale where humans turned into dragons. "I love adding little details like the falling rocks," Mark says. "As an illustrator, I try to think not only of a scene, but also what might have happened right before and right after."

2 YEARS AGO IN DAYS...

24x36 inches on masonite

"Tim Hildebrandt started out as a mentor and became a better friend," says Mark. "He taught, encouraged, pushed and inspired me." This piece was painted as a tribute to him, shortly after he passed away in 2006. His brother Greg posed for the wizard.



3 THE BARBARIAN

24x36 inches on board

"I was once told that painting a close-up of a head is one of the hardest things to do," says Mark, reflecting on this character study. "There is something to be said for that."



Wayne Antony Reynolds

LOCATION: England
 WEB: www.waynereynolds.com
 EMAIL: waynereynoldsart@ntlworld.com
 MEDIA USED: Acrylics on board
 JOB: Freelance illustrator



"I began drawing in earnest around the age of 12," Wayne says. He devoted considerable time to sketching and painting, "mainly depicting historical warriors, fantastic creatures, legends and sci-fi."

Wayne worked as a sign writer and a computer games concept artist prior to striking out as a freelance illustrator. When he started looking for commissions, he naturally chose his favourite subjects: sci-fi and fantasy, comics and roleplaying games.

"I've been fortunate enough to successfully inflict my artwork on a number of gaming and fantasy publications and projects," says Wayne. Among those are 2000 AD and Warhammer Monthly.

He's also worked with Wizards of the Coast on Magic: The Gathering CCG and the Dungeons & Dragons RPG.

1 DRAGONS - DRAGON

16 5x12in acrylics on board

"This cover image was originally just going to show the central pillar with a red dragon below it," says Wayne. "The aerial combat between dragons was a later addition."

2 SECRETS OF XEN'DRIX

10x 28in acrylics on board

This is actually the second version of the cover image. "I wasn't happy with the original sketch," says Wayne. "So I decided to re-pencil it from scratch, right at the last minute. It was hard work but I'm glad I made the changes."





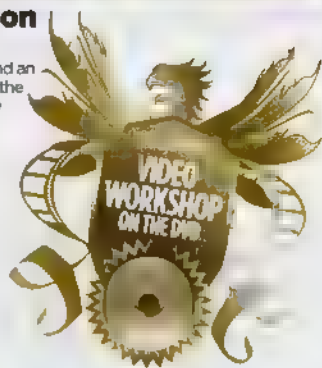
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This month's tips and techniques...

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ILLUSTRATION

68 Sci-fi mech art

"Create something new based on what you already know..." Sci-fi artist Saejin Oh explains all!

This issue:

68 Sci-fi mech art

In this detailed workshop, join Saejin Oh on our mech cover image's journey from concept to final rendered image.

74 Painting wavy hair

Marta Dahlig reveals the secrets of painting and texturing realistic wavy hair strands in easy-to-follow steps.

80 Finishing touches

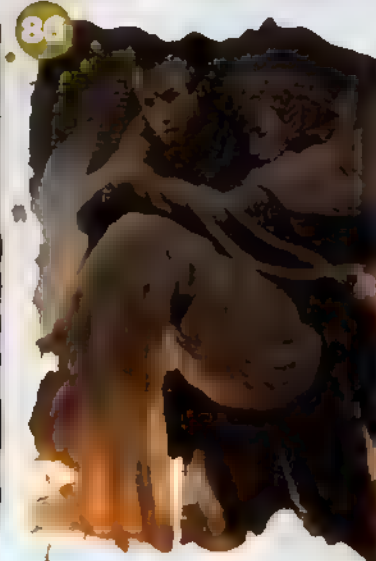
Henning Ludvigsen shows how a few tweaks at the end of your workflow can give your art a professional finish.

86 Creating an epic sci-fi painting

Marek Okon reveals how he creates a sci-fi painting of epic proportions, and reveals how important a backstory is to an image.

94 Master figure drawing

Painter and illustrator Ron Lemen outlines what he calls the Industrial Design approach to figure drawing.



Photoshop SCI-FI MECH ART

Saejin Oh explains how he created our mech cover, from concept sketch to the final rendered image

PROFILE

Saejin Oh
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



When you paint science fiction you don't create something out of nothing. Instead your imagination creates something new, based on what you already know. In a sense, your artwork is a mosaic of the knowledge you possess, but put together in a certain order to create something vibrantly original. All that might sound daunting, but there's nothing to worry about. I don't know any more than you do - it's how you use your ideas that counts. Painting sci-fi enables you to unleash your creativity, bringing to life anything from weird aliens to hulking robots. The flipside of this is you need to know how to paint different materials and create futuristic designs. Before getting started, I like to have a clear idea of what I want to draw. Think of it as a tree - you can always branch out with your ideas, but you'll need a trunk for those branches to stem from. You can develop ideas and finishing touches as you draw, but you'll need a solid direction for your ideas to grow into. For this workshop, I chose the subject "A female mech pilot in a bright, colourful suit." So, let's see where our imagination and that topic takes us.

DVD Assets

The Maelstrom
The Maelstrom
The Maelstrom
The Maelstrom
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The Maelstrom
The Maelstrom
The Maelstrom

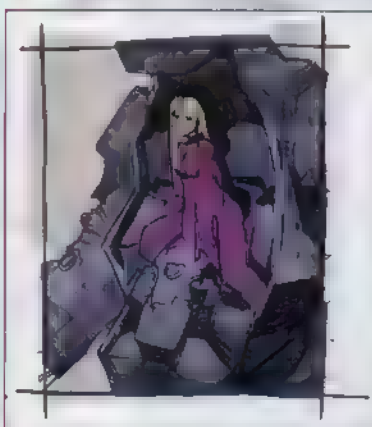
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1 Start with a thumbnail

Every painting I do starts with a thumbnail, outlining the goal for the finished piece. You don't need to put a lot of detail in your thumbnail, just try to clarify in your own mind what you're striving to achieve with the image.

At this stage, it's important to keep it simple and display your idea clearly. Remember, your sketch doesn't have to be structurally or anatomically sound - those errors can be mended as you develop your painting. All you're doing is getting down the design elements and creating a basic colour reference.



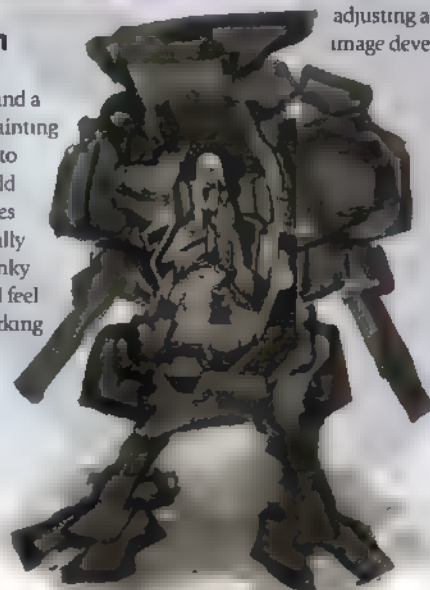
2 Create a rough end goal

Now that you have a subject and a thumbnail to develop your painting with, try going a bit deeper into the elements of the sketch. Add new ideas and remove old ones that don't work as you originally envisioned them. Modify clunky ideas as you go. At this stage, I feel that the mech design isn't working because I'm having trouble grasping the idea as whole. Fortunately, there's a simple solution to this problem...

3 Expand the view

If the object you're drawing is larger than the entire canvas, you may have trouble understanding the structure of the object as a whole. I'm sure that this is a problem every artist experiences occasionally in their work. To combat it, and to restore your sense of perspective, increase the size of the canvas so the entire object fits. You can always crop out stuff you don't need later.

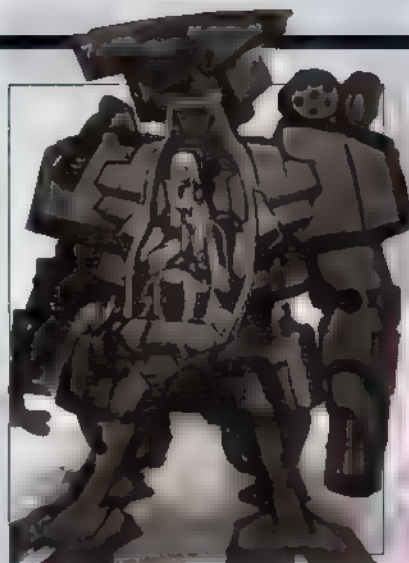
My file size is pushing the limit due to the canvas increase, but that's fine for now. I quickly draw in limbs for my mech. It looks rather awkward and will need adjusting as the image develops. ➔





4 Develop the idea

For the size of mech I'm drawing, the skinny limbs aren't working well. I decide to buff the mech up and change one of the guns into a hand with an opposable thumb, adding variation to the design. I drew inspiration for the mech from modern tanks, as well as a slew of sci-fi games and movies. As a result, the design of the mech is sharp, angular and boxy. Most of the exoskeleton is well protected, as are the internal wires, hydraulics and gears. I have other design ideas popping up, but I'll hold on to those for now. Since I have the basic structure, it's now time to look at dimensions and connect the girl and mech together.



5 Give dimension

Since I drew the whole mech without any perspective guidelines, there are bound to be errors. To find them, I quickly draw a two-point perspective on a foreground Multiply layer, erasing any lines that cross over the mech.

With this indication of space, I have to choose where the mech will be in the composition. This means selecting a background. As I chose to draw the pilot with the mech's hatch open, I can't really have her looking pretty on a battlefield. After some internal debate I settle on a garage to complement the mech's passive stance. I also sketch an oil heater on the wall, blending the elements together.



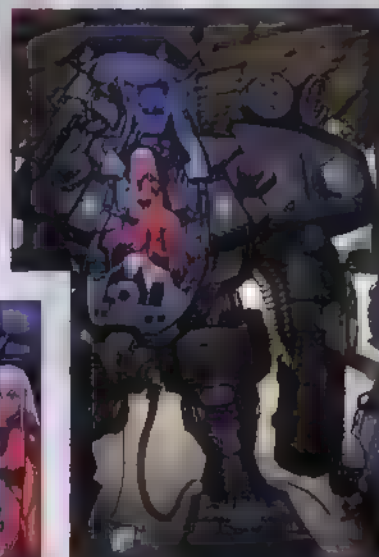
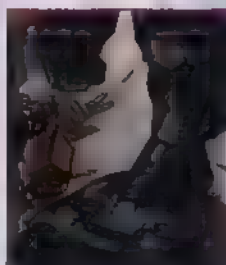
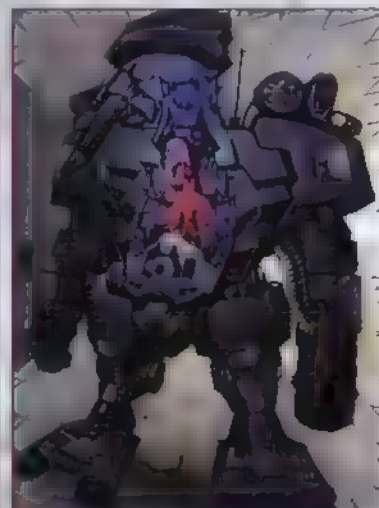
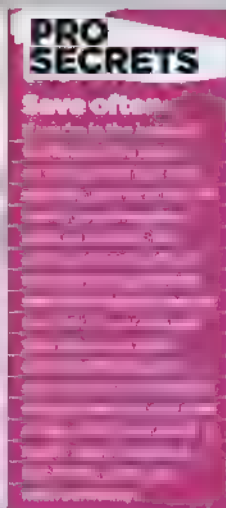
6 Add colour

This stage could have come much later, but I want to get a feel for the contrast of the pilot and mech. To colour the pilot, I create two new layers: an Overlay and a Multiply layer. I find the Overlay layer is great for assigning colours to greyscale paintings. You could use a Colour layer instead, but I think that tends to look dull unless you use an Overlay layer on top of it, so why bother?

After the pilot's coloured, I expand the canvas to the right to give more room for the mech's left arm and shoulder armour. I also correct some minor perspective errors as I go along. While doing this, I add rough indications of a few new ideas I've had for the mech, such as belt-fed bullets, new gun designs and cockpit lights.

7 Fix perspective lines

I'm not particularly organised when I work, so I often end up going back to correct perspective after my initial rush of ideas. If you can avoid getting caught up in your sketch stage then I'd suggest drawing with correct perspective from the outset – it saves plenty of redrawing time later. As I correct, I think about improving my mech design, adding some weaponry and moving elements after my tweaks.



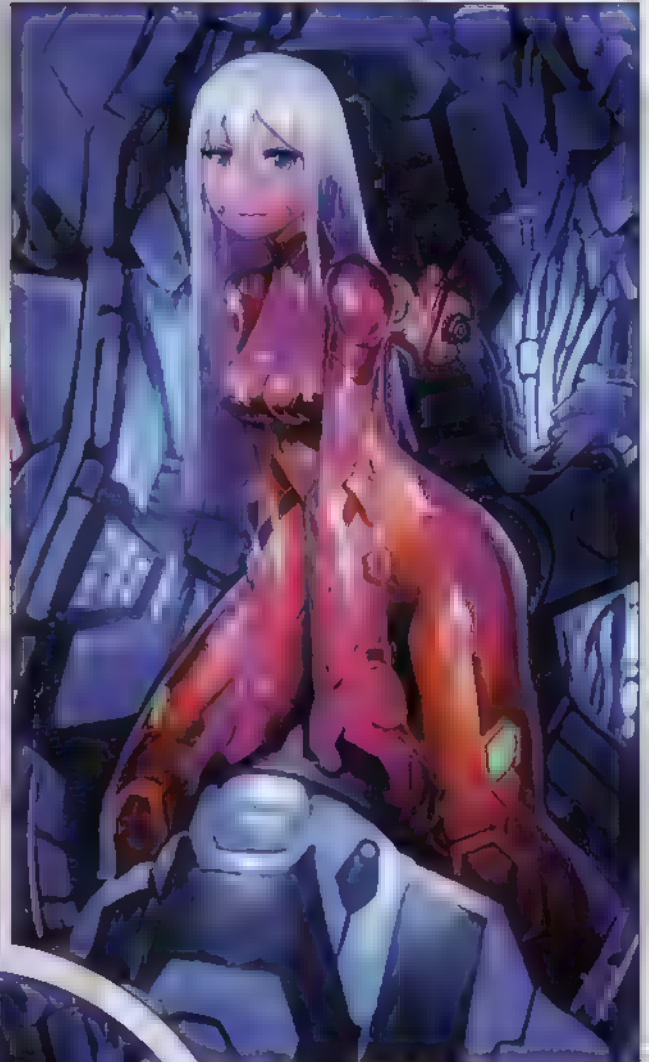
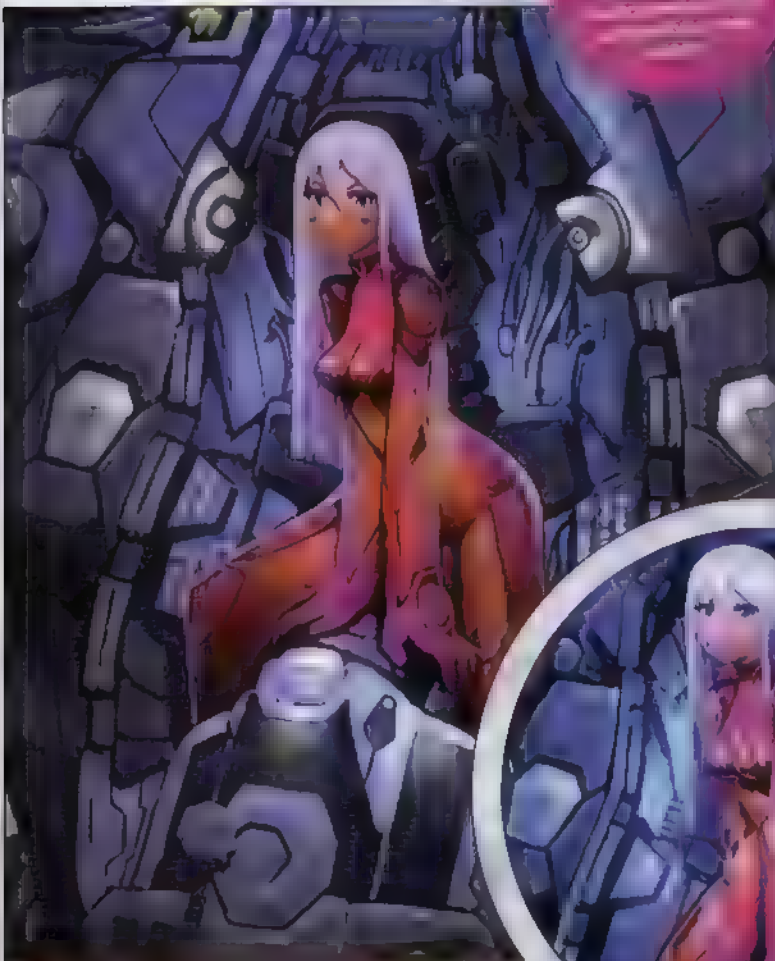
8 Add a rough background

I've already decided that the mech will be in a garage/repair shop, so I do a quick internet search to get some real-life reference. From the reference I draw in the red toolbox and fuel pumps. I also add some people to create a sense of perspective, but end up removing them later because they clutter the image. During this process I get a few more ideas, mostly for the mech's navigation mechanism. If you look at the top side of the hatch, there's no obvious peek hole for our pilot to look through, indicating this mech is a fully digital machine that gives the pilot a monitor-feed of what's going on outside. To allow for that, I add sensor spheres on both sides of the mech's shoulder, using UAV and military helicopters as my reference. I also draw a few exposed wires in the interior, to echo modern-day fighter cockpits.



9 Developing the character

With all the elements starting to develop, I turn to the painting's central focus – the character. Because she'll be getting most of the attention she really needs to shine. Her immediate surroundings should be interesting as well, drawing the viewer's eyes to her. The lighting and the colour in these areas are too dull at the moment, so they're the first things I'll focus on



10 Altering the character

After I've brightened the colours I still feel something isn't quite right. I try to convince myself that it might be because all the details aren't in yet, but I know this isn't a simple detail problem there's no quick fix. I think that the overall direction of this character design needs to take a slightly different path

11 Glossing over it

Eureka! It was the gloss. I've been painting a latex suit without a gloss. It's easy to forget the simplest fact when you're hours into a painting. Taking a break to refresh your eyes and your brain can really help to identify these discordant elements. Sadly, even with the gloss, it's still not right. She's now too glossy and her posture is awkward

12 Deglossing and fixing posture

I reduce the overall glow by taking a brush and cutting out the areas that are over glossy. I already have all the layers flattened, so using an eraser isn't really an option. To work around this, I pick the colour nearest to the gloss reflections and tone down each part individually

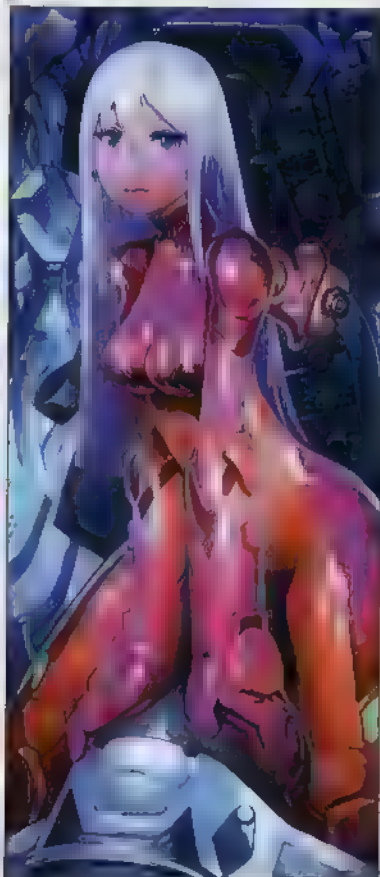
Her posture is another issue. She was off to the side in the last step, so I use the Lasso to cut around her silhouette, Copy and Paste it, then slide her over to the left. In her new position I completely redraw her right leg and make both her arms an equal length.

Next I work on the colour of the suit, painting it a mixture of orange and red/pink on an Overlay layer. Finally, I add a data cable, placed behind her back to complement the design

13 Head adjustments

The character is almost done, but not quite. I suddenly realise that her head is too big. Every time I zoom out, her head sticks out like a bobble on top of a car antenna. I might be being a perfectionist, but in my eyes it needs to be fixed.

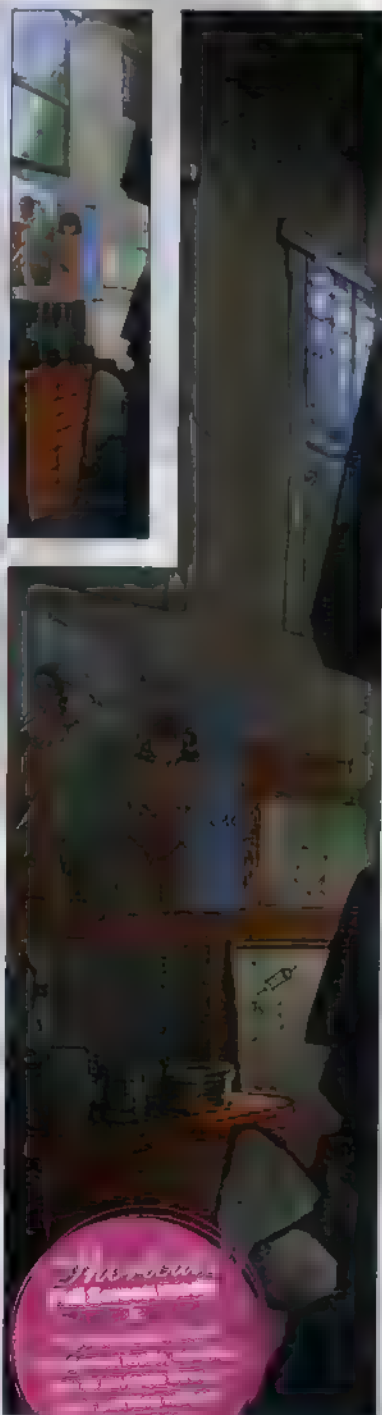
I use the Lasso tool to select the head, then resize and slide it around using Free Transform. Her hair gives me some trouble because I didn't select the bottom part of it when I moved her head. I lasso each section of hair separately, resize them and try to fit them as closely as possible to the existing parts of the image. Any colour/texture differences between the sections are painted over with a brush.



14 Developing the background

I got the rough background ready in step eight, but now it's time to take it further. Be careful not to cram too much in and distract the viewer, but avoid a barren look in your backgrounds as well. Cracks in the wall, pin-up posters, whiteboards and calendars are all characterful hints about the kind of people who work here.

After the all of the details are done, darken or brighten them as needed. I darkened most of my details (except for the outdoor scenery through the window) to highlight the mech and create a good contrast. Remember, the subject you're drawing must be easy to see or you'll lose your good work in visual clutter.



PRO SECRETS

Bind your tablet keys

Chances are you're

using a tablet to

draw, and you're

probably using a

stylus to draw.

One of the things

that's really handy

about a tablet is

that you can bind

your keys to the

tablet keys. This

is really handy

because you can

use the same keys

for different things.

For example, you

can bind the 'C' key

to the 'C' key on the

tablet. This way,

you can use the 'C'

key to copy and

paste. This is really

handy because you

can use the same

keys for different

things. This is really

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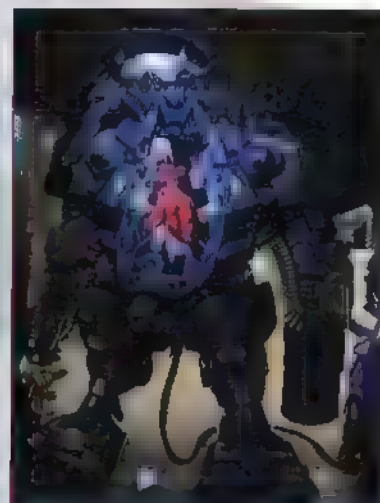
things. This is really

handy because you

can use the same

keys for different

things. This is really



15 Finalising details

I've achieved pretty much all of my goals at this point. All that remains is to add a few more details. I try a test patch of camo on the mech to see if it will work and redo the tricky roof of the garage to accommodate a more simplistic approach.

When finalising your painting, it helps to quarantine sections off mentally as you finish them. This kind of thinking enables you to estimate accurately when your painting will be complete.



16 Finishing touches

To finish up, a holo-interface, camo and a few other details are added to make the mech even more interesting. When you feel that your painting is done, save and close the file. Return a few hours later, open the file again and thoroughly examine your painting for any errors. You'll always find something you'll want to go back and fix.

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WHILE STOCKS
LAST!**

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Issue 30 April 2008



We pay homage to the art of the dinosaurs including an interview with Dinotopia creator James Gurney and Weta Workshop's Greg Broadmore creates a dinosaur for a film. Lee Carter shows how he created his Dead Eyes strip for the UK's coolest comic £2000 AD.

Issue 31 May 2008



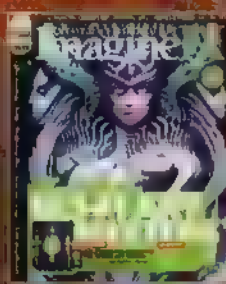
We bring you a special double-cover issue. We take you to the art of composition, and show you how to draw hands. We also chat to Star Wars and Batman concept artist Dermot Downey, and present a guide to ZBrush for beginners. Plus, we catch up with Marm Tor's Liam Sharp.

Issue 32 June 2008



Meet the new heroes of comic art in this special issue, which comes complete with the Marvel comic. Plus, we chat to Suburban Glamour's Jamie McKelvie, and bring you workshops on custom brushes, colour theory and techniques for creating a scene.

Issue 33 July 2008



In our extra special double-cover issue we exclusively interview famous Alien mastermind HR Giger and legendary Blade Runner concept artist Syd Mead. Workshops cover how to draw heads effectively and focus on ways in which you can enhance your creativity.



Issue 33 August 2008

In this issue concept artist and illustrator Jonny Duddle shows how to bring humour to your art. Workshops shed light on undead warriors and creating animal-human hybrid facial features.

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Workshop PAINTING WAVY HAIR

Learn the secrets of painting and texturing realistic wavy hair strands with these easy-to-follow steps from **Marta Dahlig**



Painting realistic hair is a very difficult thing to do. Mastering this skill is a matter of possessing both theoretical and technical skills. Moreover, different kinds of hair require different levels of skill – painting straight hair is much easier than depicting curls or waves. When you're painting curls you have to think about not only how the hair falls, but also how the curls will interact and how they'll be affected by the hairstyle.

Colour is another area that can cause problems. While the vast majority of

PROFILE



require a midtone and some accompanying shades. Hair's natural colour diversity requires simultaneous work with a few midtones.

In this workshop I'll cover the subject of painting wavy hair, describing both the theoretical guidelines (such as structure creation and lighting logic) as well as practical tips regarding technical execution – the use of custom brushes, colour application and texturing.

To use the workshop and its accompanying files (custom brushes are supplied on this issue's DVD) to their full advantage, you'll need a tablet and a professional painting program – preferably Photoshop, though you can adapt all the steps to work in Painter if that's your program of choice.

Shadows
dark midtones
light midtones
highlights



Colour palette

Getting your colour palette right is essential for painting realistic hair. The colour choices alone can determine whether you look like you're just as you would when shading any object, choosing shadows and highlights slightly different hues to your midtone. However, unlike the palette for painting skin, you could choose two or three midtones, applying their distinct tones to help you enrich the look of your hair.



Creating the base

While I discourage excessive layering, they are very useful. The base of the hair should be dark and neutral looking. Therefore, pick a relatively dark midtone colour and sketch out the general shape of the hair, not paying attention to the level of detail. The main idea is to establish the overall shape and direction of the hair.



airbrush

hard rapped round

few dot brush

spaced brush

Useful brushes

You should paint and touch up with it as often as you like. When you do, you should think about brushes before you start. Most of the particular moments when you use brushes are the best. With four brushes for the whole painting process, the difference is big. Hard Round, the Flat, the brush and the Flat brush. The paint will be able to flow over the following steps. All of these are the same of each of these brushes during specific painting.



Hair structure

Before painting the hair any further, you should fully define its structure – every strand has to have a logical form and an actual ending. Moreover, the structure should be depicted in three dimensions – outline not only how the particular strands curl, but also how they interact with each other. Here, you can see the structure

comprising the strand borders (dark lines), their 3D structure (grey lines) and the most convex areas lightened by the chosen light source (red marks). This process will become natural and can eventually be skipped, but for beginners I would advise doing this to practise designing hairdres



Curl sketching

Once you've planned the curls, pick a highly saturated, ragged Round of a lighter midtone and subtly block in the colours according to your guidelines from the previous step. This base will be fairly neutral, but enough to make shape definition easy.

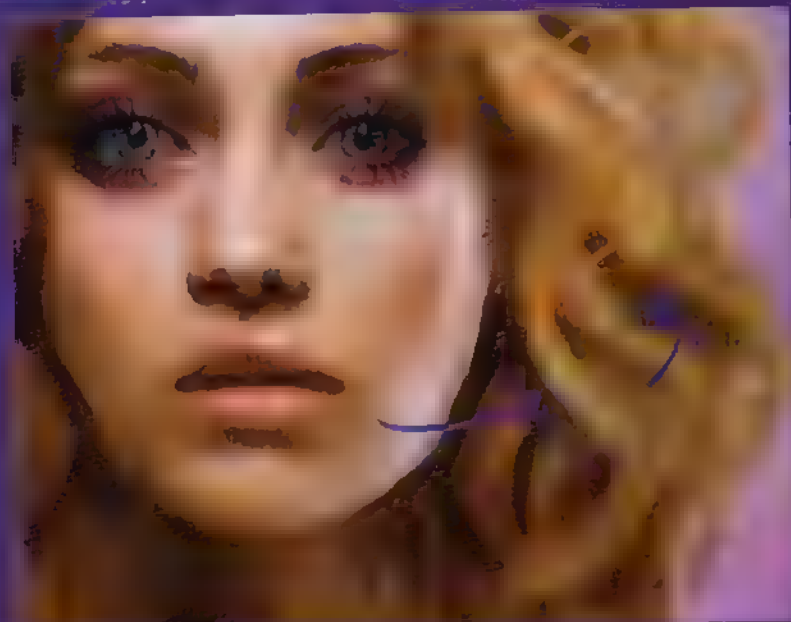


Basic shape definition

[illegible]

Light source interaction

strengthen the look by marking the hair's roots with the lightest colour. You can do this by adding strong shadows and highlights. Choose the strongest colours from your palette and apply them to the most convex and recessed areas. Even though it might seem tempting, avoid using the Dodge and Burn tools at all costs, otherwise your hair will look disturbingly metallic. You should end up with a well-defined form that looks pretty complex. If you feel the colours look too dull, try playing with the Colour Balance tool, especially the Shadow and Highlight sliders. There are some combinations that seem to work best for certain hair colours – for example, try adding some blue tones to the shadows for brown hair, oranges, and some blue shades mixed with red, boosted with red-bluish highlights for blonde shades. Experimenting with the colours, shadows and highlights in this way will help you to find the perfect combination of shades and tones for your image.



PRO SECRETS

Keep it loose

When painting hair, it's important to keep the strokes loose and natural. Avoid using a hard brush or a small brush size, as this can make the hair look stiff and artificial. Instead, use a soft brush and a larger brush size to create a more realistic, flowing effect.



Textures taken further

Now shrink the brush size by approximately 20-30 per cent and continue applying the hair strands with the same, rapid strokes. Vary the chosen colours slightly, in terms of both hue and brightness, but remember to apply them gradually to keep the final look consistent. The hair should now start looking more plastic and artistic.

Form shadows and cast shadows

During the texturing phase you'll define the shape of the curls further and will probably add some more shadows and highlights to the new hair strands. Remember that defining different types of shadows is important for achieving realistic hair. When it comes to applying shadows, consider how the form shadow (orange arrow) is created by the convexity of the light source object. Simply think of the hair under the light source as a round object. The cast shadow (blue arrow) is created by the hair casting a shadow over another. To add shadows quickly during any part of the process, create a new layer and set its mode to multiply. Apply additional, highly transparent shadows with the Airbrush tool to help the hair look more realistic.

Basic texturing

Using the technique described in the previous step, paint in some basic hair strands with the Hard Ragged brush. Keep the brush strokes short and form parallel scribbles general shape of curls. Remember to shade the highlights and shadows with different colors. The hair should now start looking more plastic and artistic. To add shadows quickly during any part of the process, create a new layer and set its mode to multiply. Apply additional, highly transparent shadows with the Airbrush tool to help the hair look more realistic.



Texturing logic

It's time to add detail to the hair design. The general logic of texturing hair is simple: use brush strokes of different colors and sizes to create a sense of depth and texture. Start by blocking in the basic shape of the hair with a large, soft brush. Then, use smaller, harder brushes to add detail and texture. The smaller the brush, the higher the Opacity and the lighter the color. Start by blocking in the basic shape of the hair with a large, soft brush. Then, use smaller, harder brushes to add detail and texture. The smaller the brush, the higher the Opacity and the lighter the color. Start by blocking in the basic shape of the hair with a large, soft brush. Then, use smaller, harder brushes to add detail and texture. The smaller the brush, the higher the Opacity and the lighter the color.



The multiple dot brush

It's time to add detail to the hair design. The general logic of texturing hair is simple: use brush strokes of different colors and sizes to create a sense of depth and texture. Start by blocking in the basic shape of the hair with a large, soft brush. Then, use smaller, harder brushes to add detail and texture. The smaller the brush, the higher the Opacity and the lighter the color. Start by blocking in the basic shape of the hair with a large, soft brush. Then, use smaller, harder brushes to add detail and texture. The smaller the brush, the higher the Opacity and the lighter the color. Start by blocking in the basic shape of the hair with a large, soft brush. Then, use smaller, harder brushes to add detail and texture. The smaller the brush, the higher the Opacity and the lighter the color.



13 Achieving a messy look

The hair is already looking rather interesting now, and all that's left to do is some thorough texturing in order to create a truly realistic look. Still using the Hard Round brush, pick lighter colours for both your shaded and highlighted hair parts and apply brushstrokes of 50 per cent Opacity over the hair strands. Don't try to make all of the narrow lines parallel! In fact, make some of the hair strands overlap each other in order to create a natural, slightly messy look.

15 Do the flipping trick

Now it's time to do a little trick to make

of typically messy hair

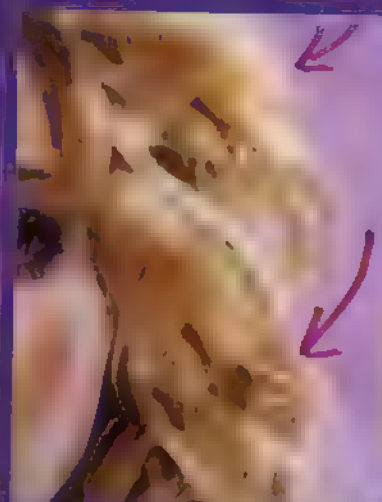
PRO SECRETS

For a skin effect, use the Dodge tool.



14 The Spaced brush

Open a new layer and use the Wide Spaced Pixel brush (on the DVD). The idea is to create a pixelated look, which gives the hair a grainy, photographic quality. Now, choose a light colour and run this brush over the hair. Don't follow the waves too closely – make the single hairs run wild, out of the frame of the hairdo and over the existing curls (blue marks). When you create the first base, use the Gaussian filter on them. Now, create another layer and repeat this process, but this time blur the strands slightly less.



16 The Dodge tool

As mentioned earlier in the workshop, I advise you to refrain from using the Dodge tool when painting hair because it can give the strands an unwanted metallic look. There is, however, one exception to this rule. Dodge can greatly strengthen the effect of backlit hair, creating an enchanting halo effect. Here, I carefully applied the Dodge tool in an airbrush shape on the borders of the highlighted hair. The pink arrows in the image above show where it has been used.



17 Final image

Take a final look at your piece. If you feel your hair is looking too monochromatic, use the Colour Balance tool. If the hair colour is greatly different to that of the skin, create a bounced-off colour effect by eye-dropping the hair's midtone and applying it to the skin with the Dodge tool. To check that you haven't made any anatomical or perspective errors. When you're happy with this, try practising with different colour palettes and hairstyles to refine and improve your technique.

Featuring the best art from issues 11–20 of ImagineFX magazine



A showcase of dazzling fantasy art
from around the globe



Also inside

Step-by-step painting workshops and interviews
with leading fantasy artists

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Artist insight HENNING'S 101: FINISHING TOUCHES

Henning Ludvigsen explains how to give your art a professional finish by making a few tweaks at the end of your workflow

Artist PROFILE

Henning Ludvigsen
COUNTRY: Greece

 Norwegian digital artist now living in Greece, with more than nine years of experience working in advertising and more than five years as a games developer.
www.henningludvigsen.com

DVD Assets
The files you need are on your DVD in The Henning Ludvigsen folder in Workshops.

There's a old saying that states that "perfection is in the eye of the beholder," and for artists of any kind these words of wisdom certainly ring true.

We all strive for perfection in our art, no matter how we perceive it, and sometimes it's hard to know what to do to achieve that certain look or expression we're aiming for. Sometimes your art doesn't need much doing to it to achieve a professional look; you simply have to know what to do and how to do it to get there. It's often easy to label your art as finished when in fact you could've taken it several steps further to another level.

When dealing with digital art, there are also technical aspects that you'll bump into, such as what resolution to work with and how to deal with file formats at the end of the process.

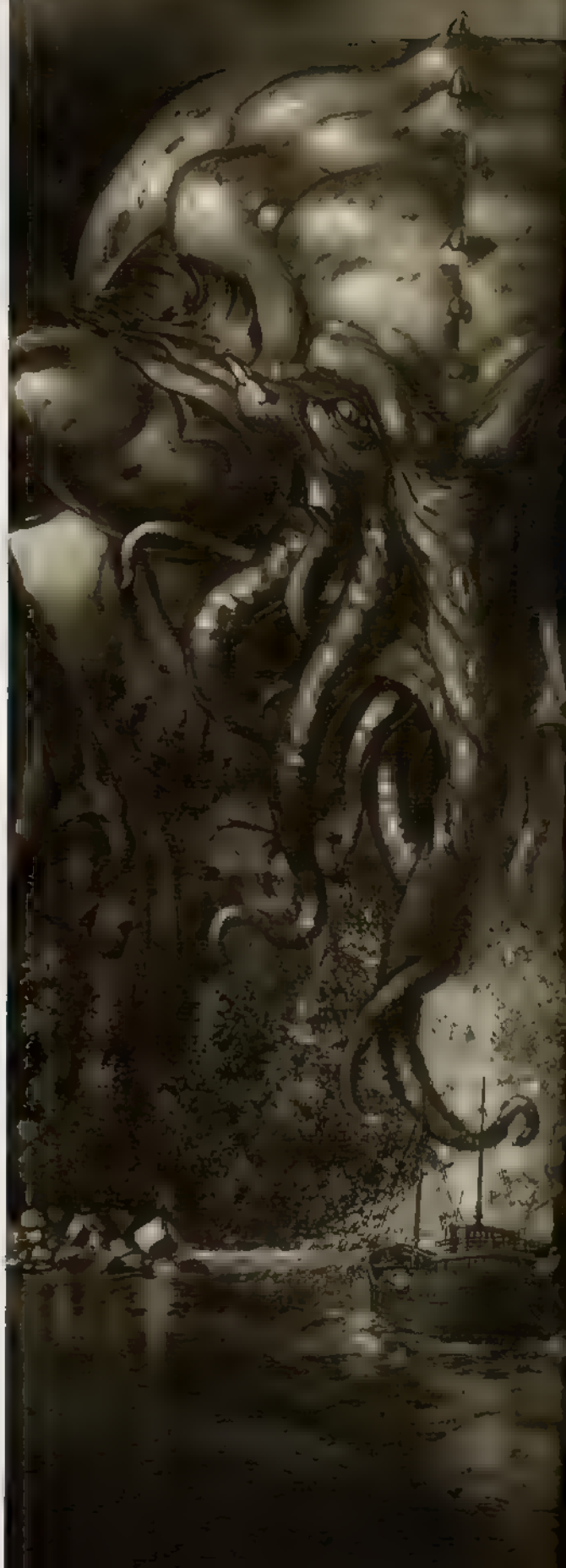
FEATURED ARTISTS

Martin Bland
www.spyrotechnik.com

Michael Dashow
michaeldashow.com

Edo Pili
www.eddidit.com

Uwe Jarling
www.jarling-arts.com



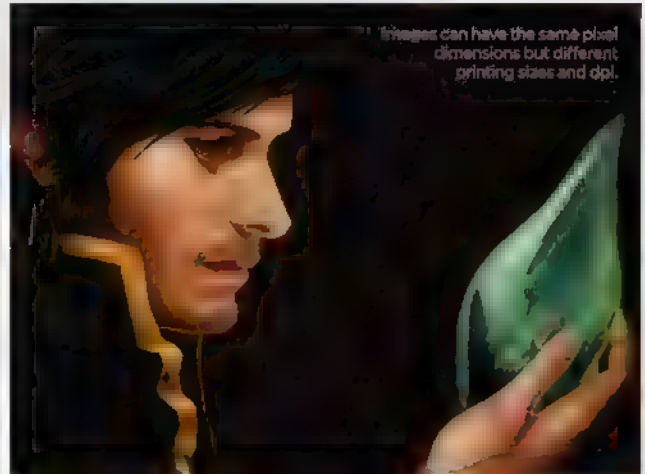
PIXEL SIZES AND RESOLUTIONS

Using the artwork of professional designer and illustrator Ed Hall as an example, here's all you need to know about pixels, size and resolution in simple terms.

The difference between dpi and ppi

It's a common misconception that the higher the resolution, the better the quality of the image. Although resolution plays a huge part in the final outcome of the image, it doesn't impact on the quality as you may think.

The first point to understand is that you must separate the notions of dpi and ppi. Dots per inch, or dpi, is the amount of ink that's placed on the paper when printing. Pixels per inch (ppi) is the number of pixels that are used in an inch on the screen. Remember, the size of the pixel will always be the same, but a dot of ink can change from printer to printer.



Images can have the same pixel dimensions but different printing sizes and dpi.





Now that we know a bit more about resolution and sizes, it's time to start painting, and if you take it in stages there are so many tweaks you can do to make your final piece stand out.

1 Painting in stages

When you're sketching, the most important thing is having a fast frame rate to avoid annoying computer lag. One way around this is starting off in a lower resolution.

Once the sketch is up, in the Image Size dialog change the dpi to 200 for blocking in and the first round of detailing work, while keeping the Resample Image checkbox active. This is to scale up the quantity of pixels and information in your piece into a bigger and heavier file. Then turn it up to 300dpi before the final round of detailing.

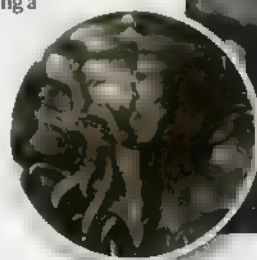
2 Premature finalisation

Newcomers to digital art often produce paintings that need another round of detailing. The urge to finish the piece and show it to the world can be very strong when you're eager, and the final (often much-needed) touch is lacking, making the overall composition suffer.

It's easy to spot an artwork that's been prematurely finished as it will lack depth and richness. The surfaces will be far too clean as they should have been detailed out more thoroughly with either different textures or shading.

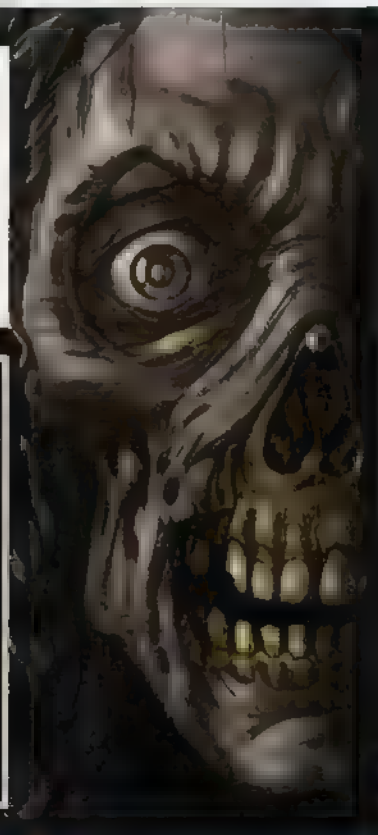
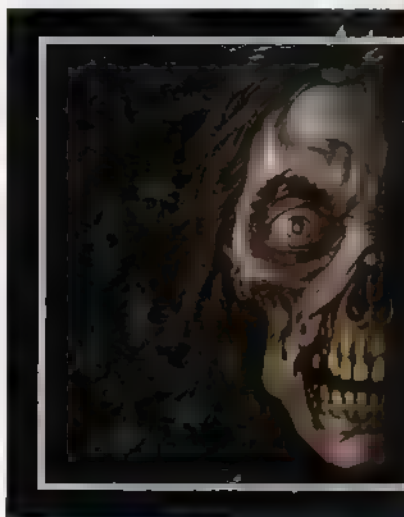
3 Refinements and texture overlays

There's something about general sketches – they can be tempting to wrap up too early. Try adding a last round of detail (still rough) by using a thinner brush and you'll see how it suddenly springs to life – it doesn't take much. And, at the end, why not add a vaguely tinted and textured surface to those boring greyscale values?



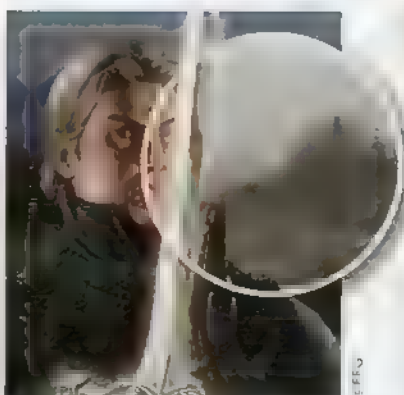
4 Side-aligned lights for drama and shape

If you think your character is looking a little flat, then add a secondary, coloured light source. Here, a red light source from the left was added to augment the dramatic expression, and to exaggerate the shape of the zombie's head.



5 Flat composition and depth

A beautifully rendered piece can still appear as though it's missing something if the depth is lacking. Painting elements found in the distance of the artwork using the same values and chroma (colour saturation) as elements close to the viewer will make it appear flat and hard to read. By desaturating and adding less contrast to elements further away from the viewer, you'll achieve depth, which can often be done easily by simply adjusting existing layers.



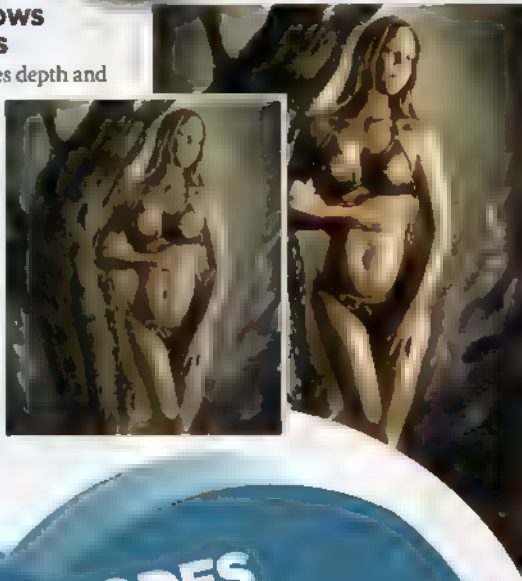
Add rim light for contrast

Look closely at the silhouettes of these characters painted by Michael Dashow. Theoretically, adding rim light works pretty much the same as adding side-aligned lights, but should be used more subtly. The resulting added contrast will still make a big impact on the viewer's final perception as it will connect your characters to their surroundings.



Control shadows and highlights

Highlight and shadow creates depth and shape, which is a much needed attribute but new artists can get far too carried away. Admittedly, it is very easy to take it a bit too far. A standard mix between dull and extreme is the safest bet – and throw away that Dodge and Burn tool. It can be dangerous in the wrong hands! Avoiding using 100 per cent black and white is a good tip, too.

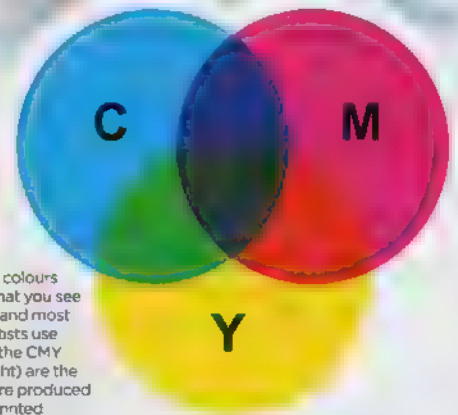
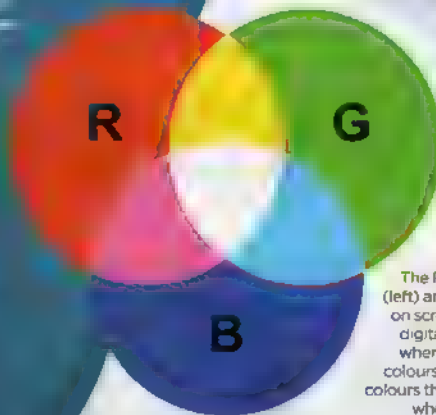


Add attention and focal points

If your painting still seems a bit dull and flat, it actually might not need much to make it a lot more interesting. In this painting by Uwe Jarling, he added a simple, saturated glow around the subject's bracelet to underline that this is the element of importance in this piece.

When you feel done with your image, take a step back and evaluate it before placing the last brush stroke. Check that the elements of interest are easy to read, and that the attention towards these elements works in a satisfying way. ➔

COLOUR MODES



The RGB colours (left) are what you see on screen and most digital artists use whereas the CMY colours (right) are the colours that are produced when printed

Workshops

9 Metal reflections

Metal can be tricky, and it can be tempting to leave it under-prioritised. Spending a little time and effort adding some actual reflections and highlights into the metal pieces in your composition will make a difference in the end. Here, a simple chrome filter was blended with the basic armour pieces to create metallic effects within minutes.

10 Breathe life into flat cartoon characters



Unless you're aiming for a simple approach, adding basic shadows and highlights to cartoon characters won't take much time, and it's great fun, too. Also, tinting the line art according to its adjacent

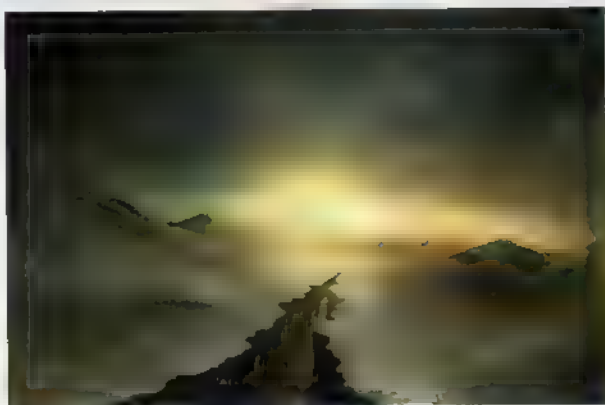
blocked-in surface will add more detail, resulting in a softer and more professional look.



11 Add final effects

Adding final, full-canvas effects to your painting is a fast and efficient way of improving its look. Here, Martin Bland added some soft beams of light and some glowing elements.

Adding a soft glow to your painting is fast, and can help soften dark and harsh-looking paintings. Put a flattened layer of your painting on top in the layer stack, run it through the Gaussian Blur filter (the amount depends on the resolution of the piece, so simply add as much as you want the glow to be). Then set the layer's Blending Mode to Screen or Linear Dodge, and play around with the Opacity slider to find the best setting. This will brighten your image, so take this into consideration. Some brightness adjustments to the layers can be done afterwards to compensate for this. ●



FILE FORMATS

A useful guide to saving files in their correct formats

PSD

(Photoshop Document)

PSD is Photoshop's native format. Use this to save your layers, text layers, adjustment layers, clipping paths, layer styles and so on. If Photoshop is your painting program, keeping your original file - with all layers intact - as a PSD file is recommended.

JPEG/JPG

(Joint Photographic Experts Group)

JPEG is good for keeping the file sizes of the images small, and is the best choice when putting your images online. The JPEG compression is lossy, which means that any crisp lines (especially sharp text) can blur a bit. Still, having JPEG images saved in high resolution and MAX quality probably won't show that much as print. This should, however, be avoided in top-of-the-range printing materials.

EPS

(Encapsulated PostScript)

This format can be used for both vector graphics and bitmaps. It's widely used in the graphic design and printing industry because of its support for both types.

TIFF

(Tagged Image File Format)

TIFF is used for high-quality images. A good choice for quality when sending your high-res images away for print. TIFF has the universal LZW compression option with non-lossy compression, which is good for sending larger files over the Internet with no loss in quality. Still, be careful and make sure the receiver knows about the LZW compression, as some equipment might print separate coloured TIFFs as greyscale.

BMP

(Bitmap)

BMP works pretty much the same as the TIFF format, except that it doesn't have a compression option. Most printers prefer TIFFs over BMPs.

GIF

GIF is used for web graphics. It's a good choice with limited colours. The maximum palette of GIF is restricted to 256 unique colours or less, and can therefore be tailored to fit the number of colours used in a graphical web element for fast-loading online graphics. This format should not be used for printed materials. GIF also supports 1-bit (hard-edged transparency) and animation.

PNG

(Portable Network Graphics)

Use this format for smaller file sizes with no loss in quality. This is a good format for web graphics as it supports alpha transparency, which means full soft transparency as it exists in a layer in Photoshop, for example.



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CREATING AN EPIC SCI-FI PAINTING

John Schoenherr reveals his thought and design process
behind creating this stunning sci-fi image



PROFILE



Whether you're an established illustrator or just starting out in the concept art world, after you've done a few images and spent a bit of time on illustrations, you're sure to reach the same conclusion. Knowing *how* to paint is not all that matters: it's important that you know *what* to paint as well.

That may sound obvious, but it's not as easy as it seems. While some clients will give you the freedom to paint whatever you want without interfering with the

subject matter, the vast majority will want you to paint specific subjects and themes.

It's down to you, as an artist, to get the job done; to put on the canvas or the screen elements that will define without a doubt the idea behind the brushstrokes, and sell the image to the client or viewer.

In this workshop I will break down the thinking and design process behind every element that goes into painting a successful sci-fi image.

I use pretty much the same method with every big picture I do, so you can

follow the same steps for many different types of image. I'll also discuss how to create a successful sci-fi environment, and what painting techniques I use to best present my image.

This workshop will be more about why than how I paint certain things in the way that I do. As Syd Mead said in his interview in IFX 32, "idea trumps technique every time," so let me show you my thought process behind my pictures, supported with some tips on how to you can most effectively present your idea.

Subject

Sci-fi is one of my favourite subjects. It enables you to show off your imagination, your technical thinking and design skills. That's especially true if you're painting something that has a purpose in the world presented. It's important to keep checking with yourself what the purpose is of the object you're painting, and to consider how someone might use it, or why it looks the way it does. This helps add sense to your world.

In general, you can divide sci-fi into two categories – technology and characters. You can show a character operating a technological device, but your illustration must focus on one specific topic. I often see illustrations that want to show too much at one time. Remember what it is that you want to show, then show it in the best way that you can.



The elements of good sci-fi

In my mind, I start collecting the elements of a good sci-fi image. I think of the space captain, the alien queen, the megastructure, the spaceship, the crew, the alien world. Personally, I prefer images that focus on characters, because it's easier for viewers to connect with the image. Characters should help you tell a story with your image. So I come up with a young, fresh space captain with a alien queen in his arms, waiting for the ship to pick him up. That's the core idea around which I base my image; while elements may change, the core idea should remain intact.

Developing your idea

I've got the core idea nailed; the next thing to do is to embellish it. I've got the central figures for the image – the space captain and the alien queen in his arms. I've got the backdrop of the strange alien world, the massive megastructure, the spaceship and its crew. But I need to add more life to it. So I decide the space captain and his crew should be waiting for the spaceship to land and pick them up. Landing spaceships always make a bit of a mess, which will make the image less static, but I'm still not happy. I think some of this will appear forced – why's the alien queen there in the first place, for example. Then I realise what I need: natives! My story is complete. The space captain has rescued the alien queen from the natives and is running to the meeting point for his ship. His crew is covering his back.

Why bother?

You might be asking yourself, does the story really matter? That's a lot of time spent procrastinating before really getting into the painting process. Many artists might think "why can't I just draw a great big spaceship in space, where it belongs?" Of course, there's nothing to stop you doing that. You can still create a great picture that way. But without a story to back it up, people will forget about your image all too quickly.

What's more, if a client has commissioned you, they may have a story already, and they'll want you to add in all the elements of their story. The better you piece these together, the more likely you are to get hired by them in the future.

Environment setup

I start by painting the environment, then the background and finally characters, keeping everything fast and loose. The setup of the environment is essential to define the mood of the whole picture. If you want a sad feel, make it grey and rainy; if you want it to be scary, set your image at night time. For this image, I go with a sunset setting, which is one of my favourite settings to paint and is good for the energetic battle feel that I am trying to convey.

Next I add the background to the image. I start this by drawing a horizon line, then add some initial terrain. I'm trying to shape it in a way that will create a nice composition.

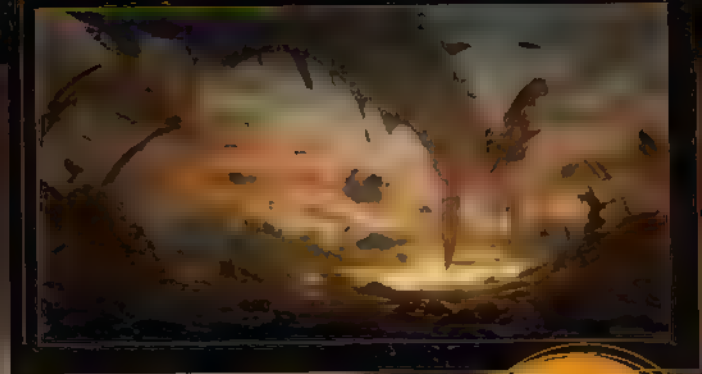
PRO SECRETS

Painting the sky

I start with some gradients to fill out the sky. First there's pale orange at the horizon, next is saturated orange mixed with stripes of red, and finally pale blue sky that gets darker the higher it goes. Be sure not to make it too dark, though – it's still one of the main light sources in the image. On top of that I add in some clouds of varying shapes and sizes. Some are more transparent and light, some thicker and heavier. Don't worry if your colour picks seem a bit awry at this stage – they can be easily corrected by applying a nice, orange gradient in Overlay mode to the image.

Megastructure

As you can see here, a strong composition element is the curvature of the megastructure, which is practically dragging viewers into the scene.



Real life reference

The human eye is far better than a camera at compensating for large contrasts in light. For example, when you walk outside on a sunny day, everything outside the sun appears very bright as your eye adjusts. This is called High Dynamic Range. So, when encountering a light source as strong as the sun, cameras can't get enough information about other

parts of the scene, like the sunset. That's why, when you photograph a sunset, you get a nice, colourful sky, but everything around it is pretty much black. The human eye can deal with this much more efficiently, so during sunset you can still see everything around you clearly. That's all thanks to the sky dome, which provides an ambient, bluish secondary light source.



Characters

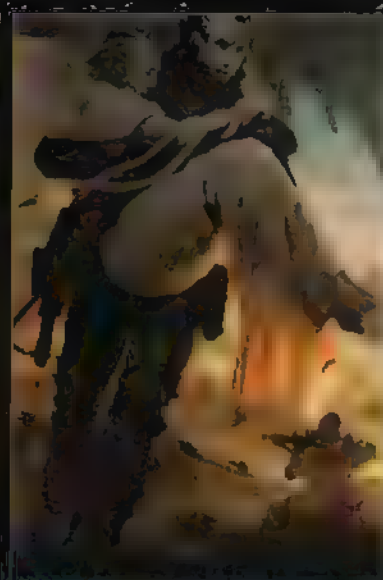
I like to paint my characters after I have established the environments they will inhabit. That way, all light sources and ambient influences are already taken into account. The shading of the characters is pretty simple, with the sky dome lighting them from above and the sun casting a strong backlight over them.



Polishing the captain's helmet

Here I pay particular attention to the space captain and alien queen designs, which I think need a bit of polish. They go through a variety of changes as I play around with the concepts a little. I was concerned that my initial ideas were too simple and generic looking, they just didn't have the out-of-this-world sci-fi appearance I was looking for to suit my story. So, after some experimenting, I came up with this, which I think is much more suitable. I particularly like the captain's suit design and his weird, partially organic helmet.

PRO SECRETS



A further note on characters and light

An important thing you must remember while painting the characters is to remember that the sky dome is all around them, and so is the light it emits. So there's a bluish light not just in front of them, but also at the sides. There are also subsurface scattering effects (that's light shining through objects), which are particularly noticeable on the queen's semi-transparent dress and veil.



Finalising the background

I want to make the megastructure in the background of the image really big and inaccessible from the surface. To indicate its size, I apply strong air perspective (an indicator of great distance), use very low contrast just to hint the details, and cast strong atmospheric bluish haze to show how high and far this structure goes. As with previous elements, I use an orange overlay on one end of the structure to melt it into the sunset.

Next month in...
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

Your indispensable guide to the world of digital art and beyond.

Art of Doctor Who

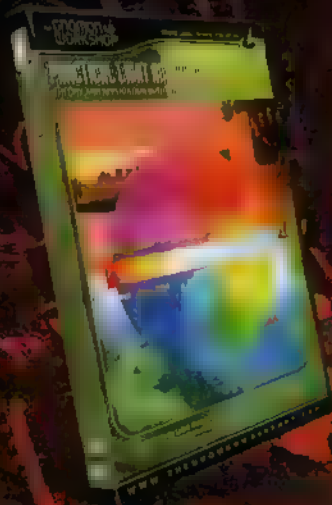
We speak to the concept art team behind the iconic British sci-fi TV series.

Minimalist art

Marta Dahlig shows you how painting less in your image can actually add more.

Don Seegmiller

The influential artist opens his sketchbook and shares his unique drawing techniques.



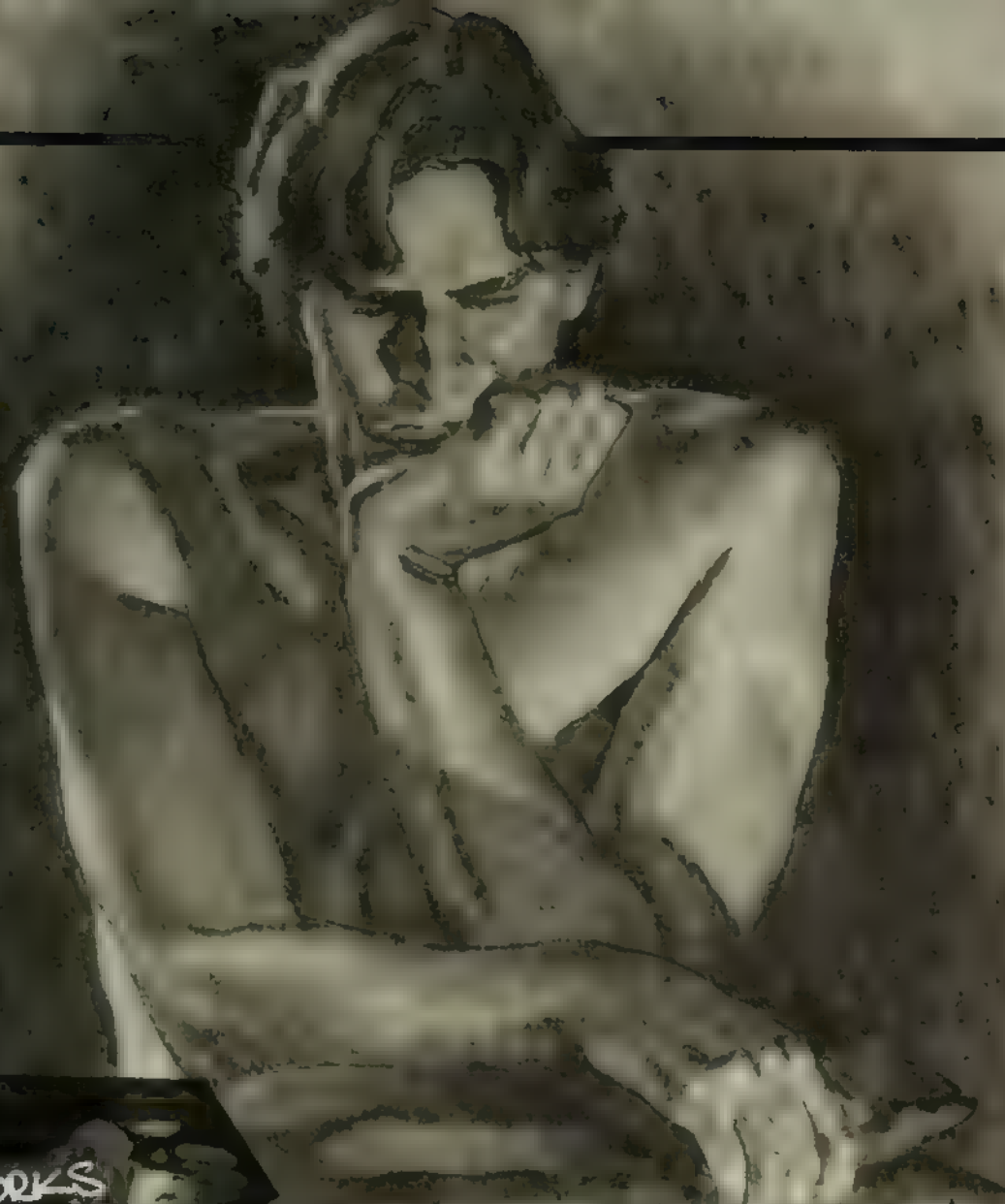
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The creator of 30 Days of Night
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project. Welcome to Hoxford.

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PROFILE



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freelance
illustrator who

has worked in games,
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Ron Lemen deves... into...
... simple shape...



... the pro...
... this method...
... switching between ge...
... for your figures. This...
... you maintain a good...

are drawing
3D figures

... ing the head, neck and...
... ing how male and fem...

... mastered the basic...
... you can then go on to add...
... information, such as...
... lighting, as I've done with...
... who has been fully...
... from lighting on the left

Breaking figures into geometric shapes

Exploring the Industrial Design method of figure drawing, which uses basic shapes to create forms

This month, I'm going to look at a particular approach to figure drawing, which is called the Industrial Design (ID) method. Its origins are age-old but it was perfected at the Art Center of Pasadena in the 1950s.

I find ID the most practical technique to use when creating the figure for any purpose. It makes it easy to control the pose and achieve convincing foreshortening painlessly.

First things first, we need to sort the head, neck and shoulders. This provides a starting point to build the figure gesture from. I've provided a detailed, annotated sketch of the head and neck for your reference, on page 96.

Viewed from the front the head is an oval shape, while in profile (side) view it's a bloated triangular form. The corners of the triangle depict the tilt of the head.

The diagram below shows cylinder figures in gesture poses, which is what we have to find next. The gesture of the pose

is a fluid, flowing line (see figure 1D in the Head, neck and basic gestures box on page 96). It's the big sweeping movement that is made between the upper and the lower halves of the body, is graceful and is established in one or two curvy lines.

Add to your first line a second line, which describes the width of the pose (figure 2D). This helps establish the overall volume of the figure – heavy or lean.

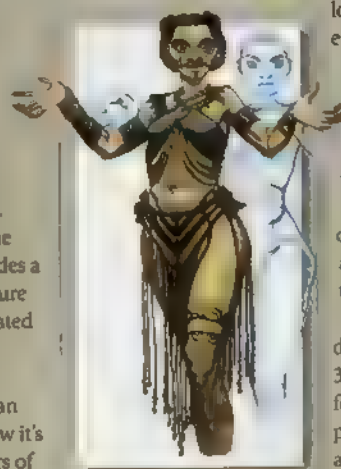
These two lines should mirror each other, moving in relationship to one another. Line three is the centre line of the pose, attached to the pit of the neck.

With a centre line drawn we can now draw line four, an ellipse or oval (figure 3D). This line describes the depth of the form. The centre line gives us another point that we can now convincingly attach the oval to, turning our three lines into an active cylinder.

Cylinders are simple to draw – easier than a cube form as we need to know perspective to make cubes look



Here the figure is rendered with hatch lines, creating an immediate illusion of form. These lines crossing over the form are crossing in the short stroke direction.



This cartoon character is fully realised using the shape design approach from the ID method. The technique can be used for any figure.

DRAWING CYLINDER FIGURES IN GESTURE POSES

Use cylindrical forms to start everything if you can. Cylinders are easy to draw and can easily be broken down into dimensional forms. In extremely foreshortened poses, overlapping ovals representing the lengthier forms will work.



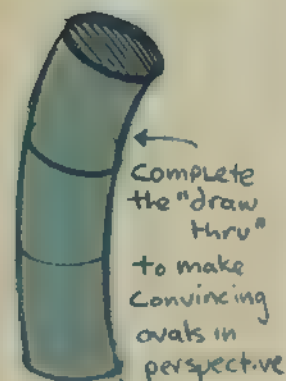
RE SKETCHES

The head and neck are very important in building a solid figure drawing. The head and shoulder relationship set up the perspective and overall growth of the figure. Below you can see the head in two different perspectives, and basic neck shapes.

The neck is a cylinder (see note, right) that flares out at the bottom. The trapezius muscles resemble a coat hanger shape, which then attach at the very back of the neck.



First
Use cylinders
to solve
figure



Extreme
foreshortened
drawings use
overlapping ball shapes



Next draw a
center line & 2
parallel lines from
shoulders —

Do not stress where
to end the
shapes! Head shape

side
bloated triangle

Front
oval

Back of Neck
attaches
across from the
bottom of nose

Neck
sweeps back
an X to 7th cervical
vertebrae



Neck is a
cylinder

Shoulders
are angled and
attach @ the back
of the neck

"Think close hanger"
The height will vary
from person to person

Sternal
Notch



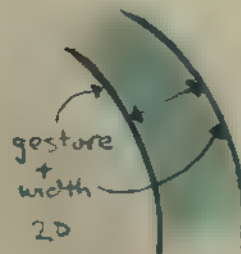
Cylinder
can then
be geometrically
divided into
more & more
surfaces!



In addition, remember that shoulders are not flat they are full in form. The tops of the scapulae, above the spine line, the tops of the trapezius muscles along the shoulder line and the space between the traps and the clavicles are all considered the top of the torso.

On the right, you can see how I build a gesture with just a few lines, as mentioned on page 95

gesture
"Long line"
of pose
1D



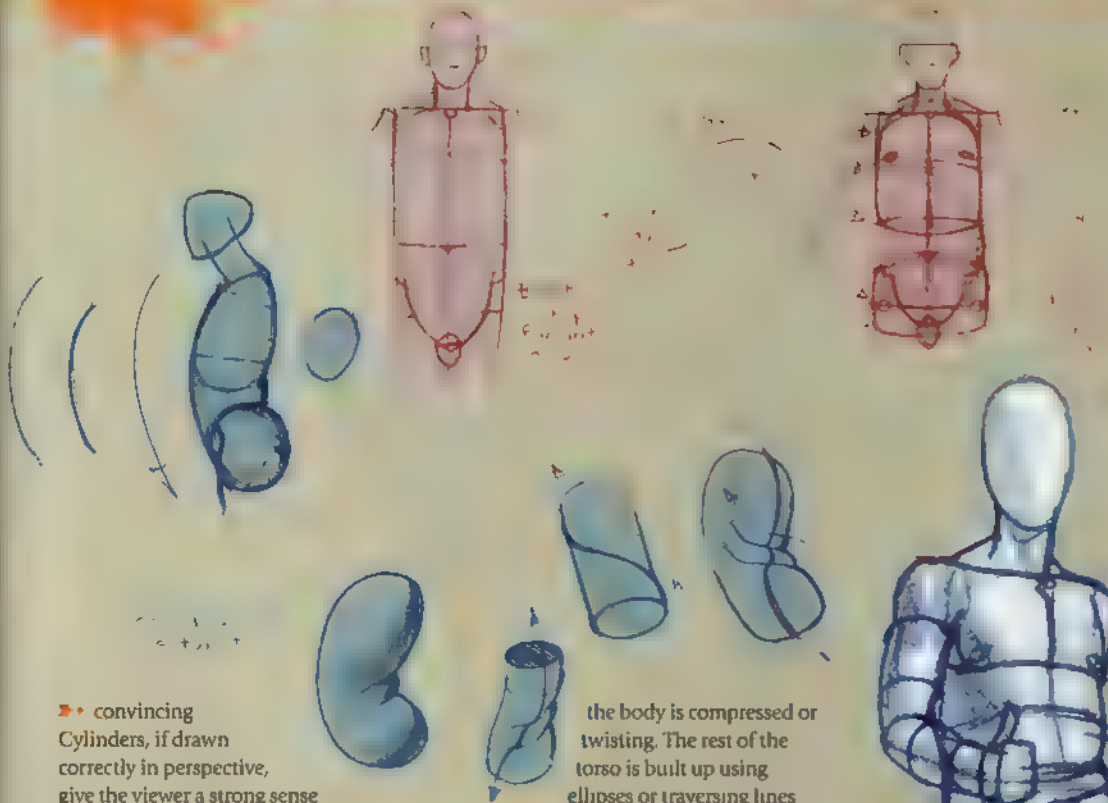
gesture
+ width
2D

Start your figure
assembling the parts like
this!



3D
gesture
+ width
+ depth
(dimension)

gesture
+ width
+ depth
+ overlap



Drawing cylinders helps define the shape as coming towards us or going away from us. It also helps define our position to the figure, above, level or below the model. The more divisions on a cylinder the more surfaces it can be broken into.

►► convincing
Cylinders, if drawn correctly in perspective, give the viewer a strong sense of position in space.

The shoulders are the top point of the cylinder, the pelvis its bottom. The pelvis varies in shape depending on what character you're drawing. It can be drawn as a sphere-like shape or a soft box – think of it like a marshmallow in shape – or can be bell or skirt-like shape.

the body is compressed or twisting. The rest of the torso is built up using ellipses or traversing lines across the centre line to square up the two halves of the torso and pelvis.

The important landmarks to indicate are nipples, the tenth ribs, the iliac crests, navel, and armpits. If your figure's back is visible, the scapulae, the dimples of the sacrum, obliques and the base of the pelvis are also landmarks.

If a figure is twisting or turning, we can easily depict this movement in the cylinder by pinching one side

A key factor in determining the shape of the pelvis is your subject's gender. Female pelvises are more bell or skirt shaped, male are more box shaped. The front of the pelvis terminates in a bullet-like shape. This is drawn inside the body cylinder shape, cutting in on either side to show the hip bones, the iliac crests. See the Perspective diagram above for more.

Draw an egg shape to indicate the ribcage, attaching it to the shoulder line and only breaching the cylinder form if

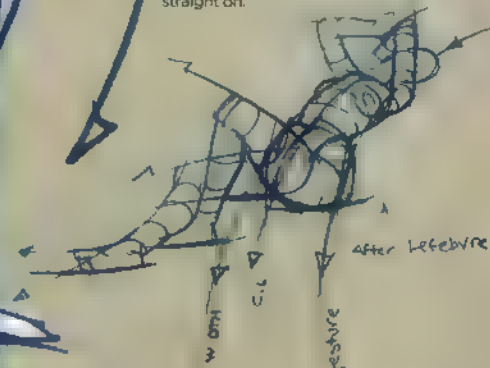
If the figure is twisting or turning, we can easily depict this movement in the cylinder by pinching one side, or creating an accordion-like relationship between the ribcage and pelvis masses (see Compression and twist, above)

The obliques play a role in shaping the cylinder: they are the third bulge on the compressed side of the cylinder. These bulges are described using S curved lines (see right), the only line type in drawing that can generate perspective in its



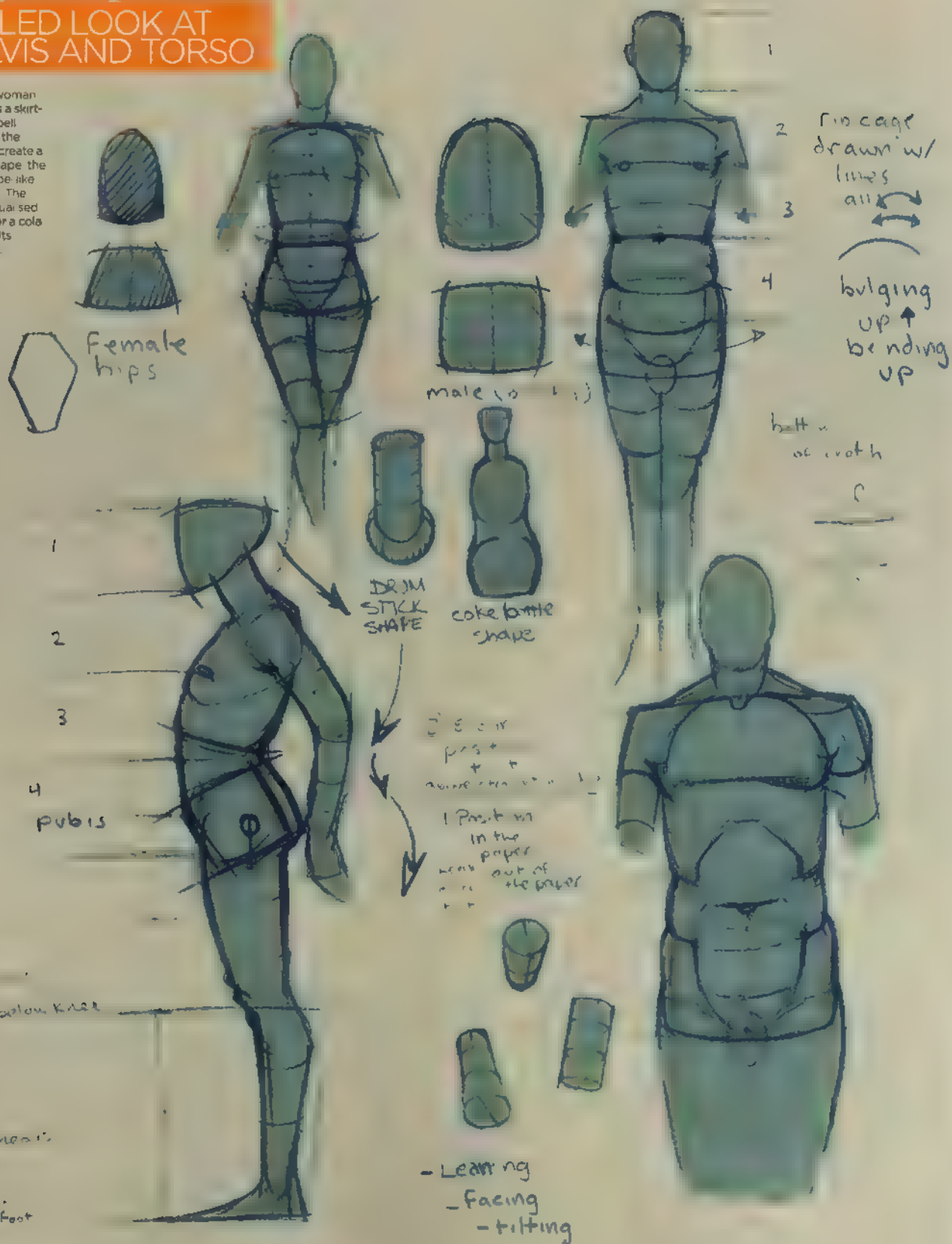
THE FIGURE IN AN S SHAPE

Draw the ribcage as if looking up at it, or lines arching upward. Draw the pelvis with lines arching down. This keeps the forms twisted correctly to the viewer from straight on.



A DETAILED LOOK AT THE PELVIS AND TORSO

The pelvis of a woman can be drawn as a skirt-like shape, or a bell shape. Through the thighs the legs create a diamond-like shape. The male is more tube-like with boxier hips. The body can be visualised as a drumstick or a cola bottle-shape in its upright position.



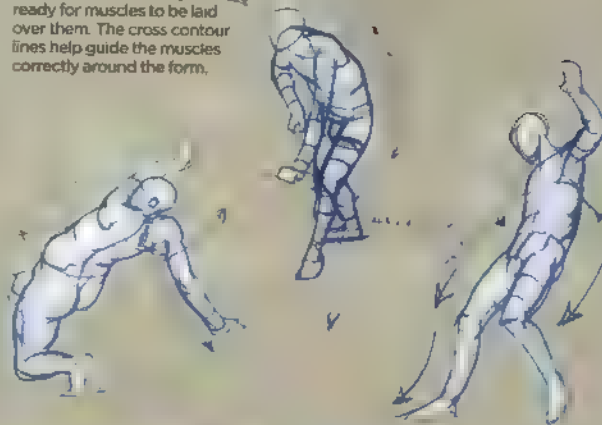
Mastering figure drawing

own waviness. This S curve starts against the outside of one shape, then swings over and completes its circuit below on the next succeeding shape. Each S curve generates a more convincing illusion of overlapping forms.

You'll notice that you've been doing a lot of flitting between the gesture and the structure of your figure. We switch often between gesture and structure to maintain a working balance of form and movement, hopefully in a similar dynamic to a Rubens or a Michelangelo but with a modern flair like that of Claire Wendling or Bruce Timm.

So, once the structure is defined, then we move into gesture again, drawing the cylinders of the arms and the legs. When your limbs are drawn in, move back into

These drawings are fleshing out the dynamic movement in each pose. Using cylinders and dividing each segment of the cylinders into thirds, the scaffolding of the body is ready for muscles to be laid over them. The cross contour lines help guide the muscles correctly around the form.



structure and define the muscles, then gesture again to describe the movement of the shadow patterns over the muscles, then structure to tighten them up...

Once you have mastered basic figure drawing, you can be more confident to move on to more complex aspects, including anatomy, figure movement and action, lighting and shading.

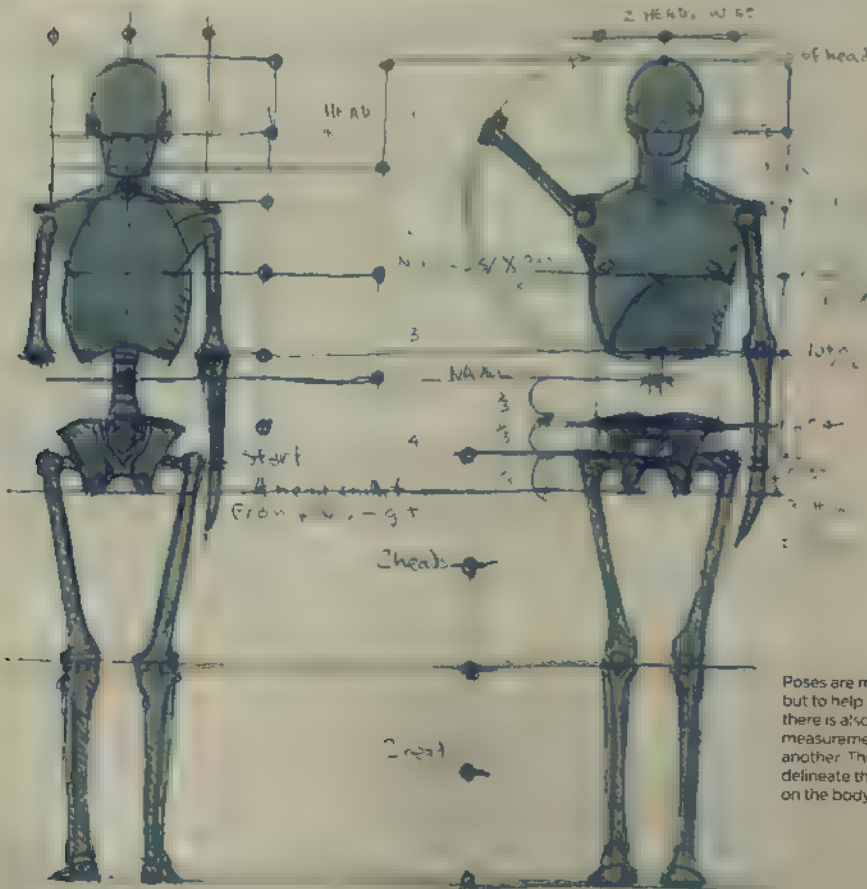
With the foundation paved, the detailed information will make more sense. By combining this method of figure drawing with the Reilly technique described in issue 31, we can solve any figure drawing from simple to extremely complex, borrowing tools from both when the time is needed for them. Keep drawing, and join me next month, when I'll be examining how to draw feet.

3D MADE EAS

perspective or someone new to drawing. Think of the cylinders as the scaffolding of the pose, something to hinge more components on to

Think of the cylinders as the scaffolding of the pose, something to hinge more components on to

The shapes designed on the scaffolding of the figure can now be mapped with shadow patterns, with the patterns falling appropriately over the shapes we've drawn - rather than drawing exactly what we see. The illusion of the drawing can suffer if we stick too closely to what we see without really thinking about what the forms are in 3D space.



Poses are measured in head units, but to help fine-tune the body, there is also a series of smaller measurements that all equal one another. This chart helps to delineate the important points on the body.

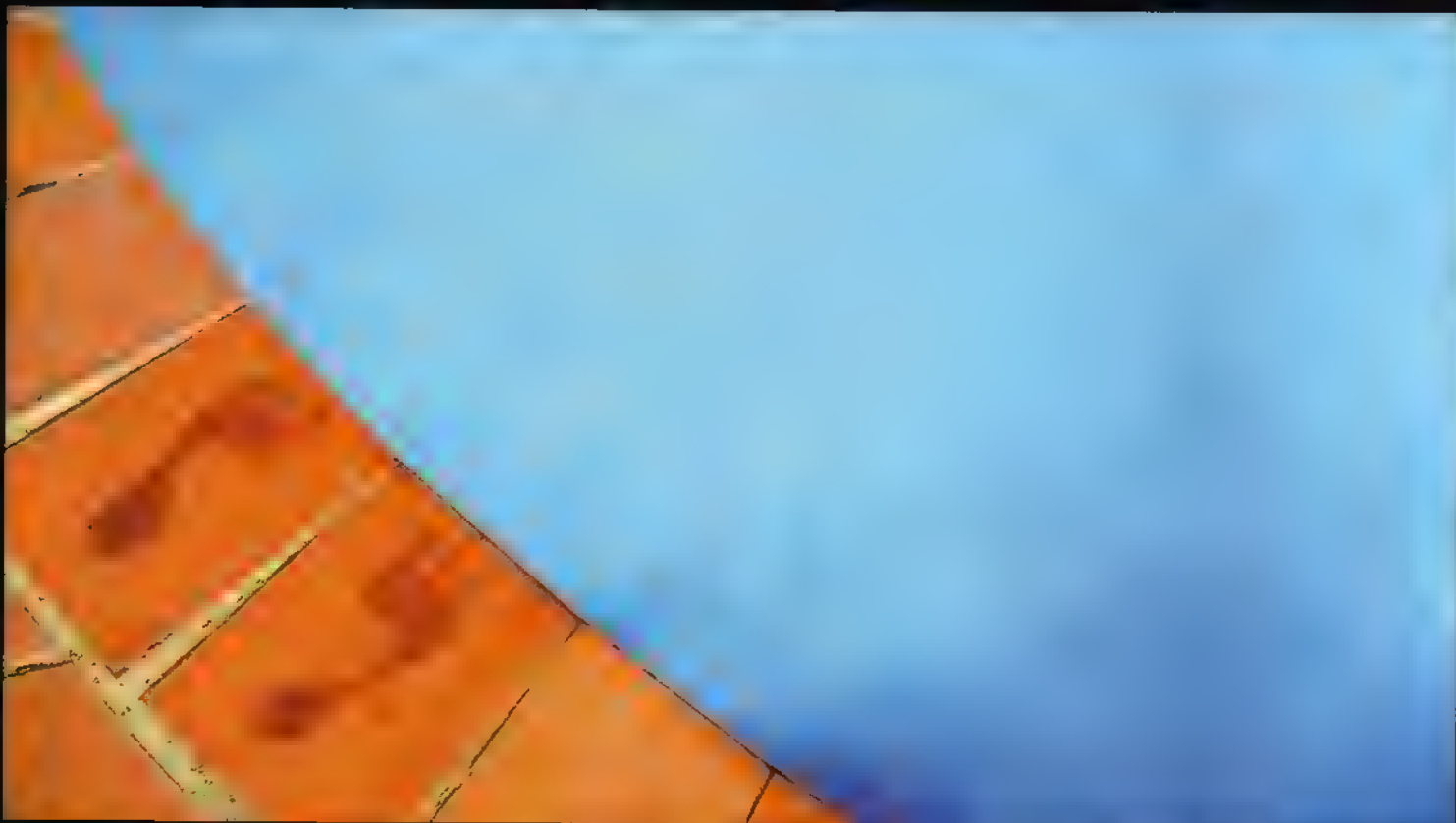


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15
PRODUCTS
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The latest digital art software, training, books and film releases...



"Bold Visions provides valuable advice for rookie artists"



SOFTWARE

102 Xara Xtreme 4

New features make this the best vector drawing app on the market.

104 Mystical Painter Bundle

Painter X plus great plug-ins.

104 GeniuX EFX

Simple post production effects.

105 Ultimate Heroic Male DVD

Male stock photo library.

105 DAZ 3D Bridge

Expand Photoshop's 3D range.

BOOKS

106 Get reading

Bold Visions, d'artiste: Digital Painting 2, Mechanika.

TRAINING

107 Comic Book Layout and Pencilling with Alvin Lee

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The Spiderwick Chronicles, Batman: Gotham Knight, La Antena, Gravitation Vol One, Ah! My Goddess: Flights of Fancy Vol 2, Tsubasa Reservoir Chronicle Vol 5.



Artist's Choice Award

Software with a five star rating receives the IFX Artist's Choice award

RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious

The Interactive Photo tool enables you to quickly edit brightness, contrast, sharpness and saturation levels.



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We've always liked Xara Xtreme. We like that it's straightforward and fast to draw with. We like that it handles bitmap and vector elements in real time. We like the ability to edit contrast, brightness and saturation. And we like that it does all of these things with stability and speed, minus a wallet-busting price tag.

But with the release of version 4, Xara has come into its own. Its pricing is incredibly competitive. It now offers serious text handling, and the new interactive Photo tool brings powerful bitmap editing and support for Photoshop's Filter Effects.

The latter is an incredibly important update to Xara. Although it's not aimed at becoming an outright photo editing environment, the new Interactive Photo Tool enables you to quickly edit brightness, contrast, sharpness and saturation levels of the bitmap elements of your project. Unlike its rivals' capabilities, this is achievable in real time, meaning that your image's tone and general levels can be

tweaked and experimented with. A live histogram chart synced to the tools enables more advanced users to set up their ideal output levels very quickly indeed. Support for non-destructive compositional handling is a further refinement, with more than 40 Photoshop plug-ins now supported via Xara's Live Effects tools.

The final major overhaul comes in the form of vastly improved text handling. The Liquid Text tool works like a run-around function which, twinned with a new live font menu for experimenting and previewing text, brings Xara bang up to date with its rivals. This, in addition to multiple page support, will win it many new fans.

New 3D capabilities via the Extrude tool is another key improvement. While basic compared to outright 3D editing environments, it enables you to add depth to vector and bitmap elements. Again, all of this happens in real time.

If you need a powerful, single-app drawing tool for both bitmap and vector projects, Xara Xtreme 4 can't be beaten on price or performance.

DETAILS

SIMONE PAMPADO

Illustrator Simone Pampado extols Xara Xtreme's virtues

What new tools do you like in Xara Xtreme?

Xara Xtreme is an extraordinary program and some of its tools are unique. Many drawing programs certainly have the same tools as Xara but they don't have the ability to quickly work with thousands of objects.

What type of work is Xara Xtreme good for?

I use Xara Xtreme for all of my jobs, from photographic retouching to 3D sketching, from the illustration to the logo and to the web. Xara's strengths are its speed, flexibility and that it takes only few clicks of the mouse to create any illustration.

What's Xara's workflow like?

As an illustrator I also use other software, for example Arcon for architectural sketches, but then I add effects, radiosity and textures with Xara. I also use Corel Photopaint, but only for retouching with the Clone tool.

I use Xara with a Wacom tablet, above all to create hair or Bézier curves in the sketches of people. I use both a PC and Mac with the Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, but when I teach I use Xara Xtreme – my students adore it!

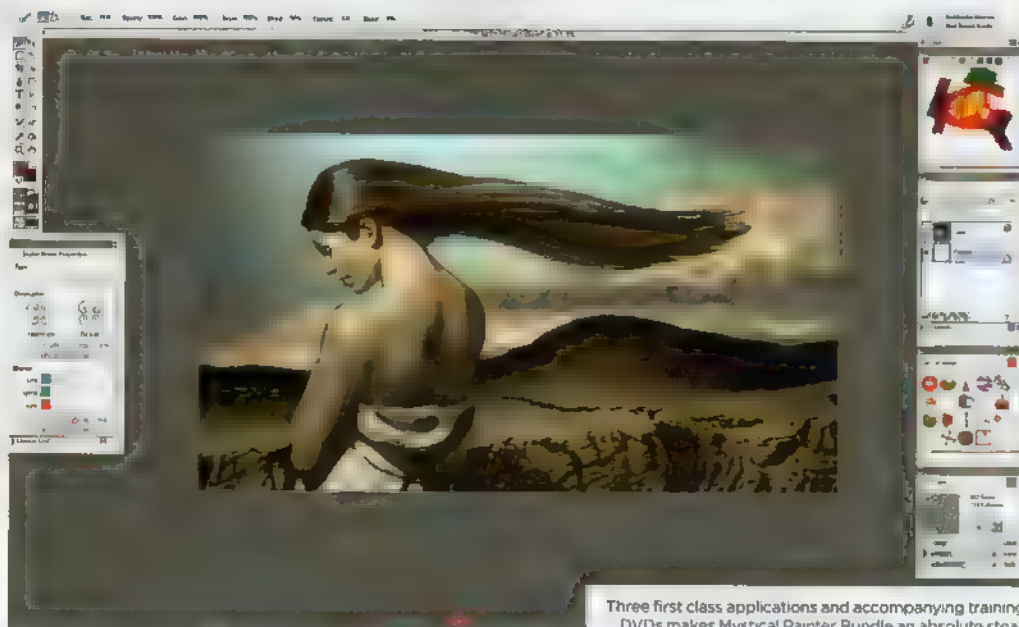
What improvements could be made to Xara?

In the future I would like it to be possible to create larger-scale sketches. I've had some difficulties when I've been asked to create large-scale advertising posters and elevated dpi.



Simone is a self taught professional designer based in Italy who's twice won the Corel World Design Contest

www.pampado.info



Three first class applications and accompanying training DVDs makes Mystical Painter Bundle an absolute steal

Mystical Painter Bundle

MAC & PC



COMPLETE PACKAGE Painter X, two top-class plug-ins, and two learning resources at a bargain price

PRICE \$349 **COMPANY** Auto FX **WEB** www.autofx.com **CONTACT** +1 205 980 0056

Mystical Painter Bundle isn't necessarily a new release as such, but it is an impressive one. Within the package comes bundled Painter X from Corel, along with Auto FX's Mystical Lighting and Mystical Tint Tone and Color plug-ins, together with comprehensive training DVDs for all three apps. All for the bargain price of \$349 - a saving of over \$550. Can you get better value for money?

The answer is a resounding no, especially with the quality of the products. Painter X is the digital painting application, a powerful dexterous tool capable of mirroring true-life painting techniques. Its integration with Photoshop is superb, while its brush library, colour palette, layer and blending modes are simple to grasp and exceptionally easy to use.

This central app is bolstered with two superb plug-ins: Auto FX's Mystical Lighting and Mystical Tint

Tone and Color. The former is a powerful photorealistic shading and lighting effects unit, which includes 16 visual effects and more than 400 editable presets. The results are superb, and in a few clicks can render your work vividly life-like.

Mystical Tint Tone and Color is just as powerful, enabling you to edit and apply 38 separate effects filters that manipulate the colour, tonal range and ambient of your image. It includes global light sourcing for realistic shading control and stackable effects layers, enabling you to build up a solid tonal range across light and dark areas.

But even if you're new to digital art, this bundle boasts a bespoke training DVD for each of the apps. They're all easy to follow, in-depth and very well produced, ranging from beginner level through to power-user features.

This is a limited offer, so if you don't own Painter X already, you'd do well to get this bundle before 31 August.

DETAILS

We're not saying we'd use a 60 of the filters, but this collection's decent and good value.



GeniuX EFX

PAINTERLY EFFECTS

Easy painting effects fresh from the preset

Price £16 (home), £26 (pro)

Company XPro

Web www.xprosoftware.com

Contact Via website

RATING

We can be a touch wary of applications which claim to "create realistic looking hand-drawings derived from photos." But when viewed as a more linear filter application - rather than an out-and-out art application - XPro's GeniuX EFX shouldn't be completely scoffed at.

In fact, if you're after some relatively powerful, good value and varied post-production effects you'd be hard pressed to find a better example.

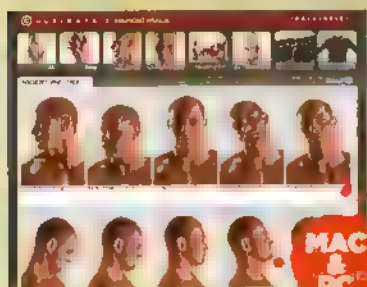
Rather than enabling the creation of artwork through painting tools, EFX enables you to apply one or more of its 60 filters to existing JPEG, PSD, HDR1 and TIFF files.

All the effects are parametric-based, much like Photoshop filters, and they include Colour Effects, Artistic, Contrast, Blur, Texture and Canvas, as well as a number of distortion, photographic and architectural effects.

Results are haphazard, though on the whole relatively pleasing. For instance, taking a vectorised artwork and applying a canvas-based filter does create a far more artistic result. At £16 it's remarkable value, only undermined by the fact it's for Windows only.



Head shots: build your own Bruce Willis-alike lead male with this DVD of reference material.



Ultimate Heroic Male DVD stock

MALE REFERENCE

Don't hold out any longer for a hero...

Price \$75

Company Ballistic

Web www.ballisticpubshg.com/dvds

Contact Via website

RATING

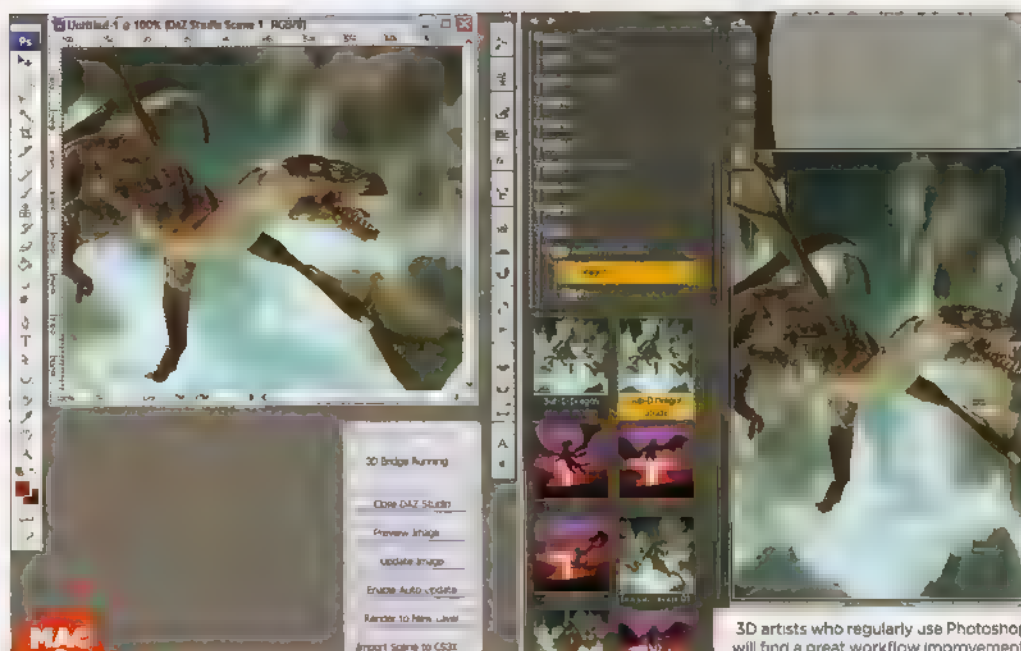
Whether used for reference or manipulation, Ballistic's stock libraries are built from the ground up with digital artists in mind. Their breadth and quality cannot be matched.

The DVD includes over 500 hi-res reference images of the beefy model in a variety of useable – and often giggle-inducing – poses at 16MP resolution in RAW format. There's also a library of clothing references for HDRI texturing which completes this good value release.

The entire library is searchable via keyword, and will prove a useful addition to your reference or posing library. There are more Ballistic character, environmental and HDRI texture collections to come.



A set of quality anatomic samples for reference purposes... or just look at the man in his pants.



3D artists who regularly use Photoshop will find a great workflow improvement

DAZ Studio 3D Bridge for Photoshop

3D PLUG-IN Expand Photoshop's professional 3D range

PRICE \$199 (\$139 upgrade) **COMPANY** DAZ 3D **WEB** www.daz3d.com

With the launch of Photoshop Advanced as part of CS3, Adobe introduced a powerful 3D feature set to its flagship application. For most it's more than adequate, but seasoned 3D users find its limited integration with existing apps makes life difficult.

DAZ's 3D Bridge plug-in looks to rectify that, bringing a professional 3D workflow to Photoshop. The real power is in the application's ability to view existing 3D scenes (created in Bryce, Carrara or 3D Studio) as layers and render them directly in Photoshop. This key feature performance is tied to your machine's muscle: our computer with 2GB RAM and a 2.0GHz processor seriously struggled. But everyday 3D artists with a far meatier set-up will benefit from the new power.

Other functions include the capacity to composite and manipulate DAZ models simultaneously through

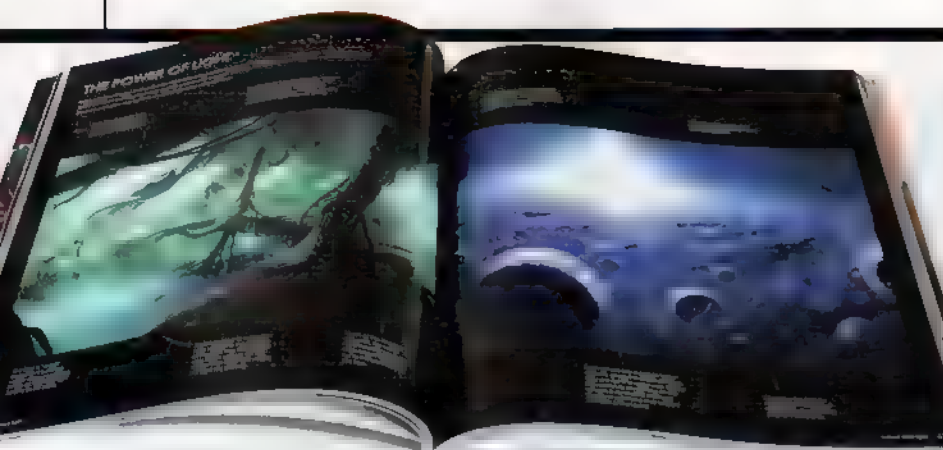
Photoshop and DAZ Studio. Existing DAZ users will find this is a true boon. For years, artists have bemoaned having to open independent apps autonomously, saving and importing files in familiar formats. But this new ability dramatically speeds a 3D workflow. Posing characters and objects in Studio before adding texture, lighting and other material effects in Photoshop is now seamless.

Also bundled with the plug-in comes access to DAZ's full library and 3D models. These are of the highest calibre, and a considered touch from DAZ, who also bundle pre-configured content scenes for you to work with within Photoshop.

If you're a DAZ Studio, Carrara or Bryce user and often use Photoshop for lighting, texture or object work, this plug-in will dramatically increase your productivity, though not necessarily your creativity.

DETAILS





Further reading...

Stunning fantasy and sci-fi techniques, plus a showcase of living legends

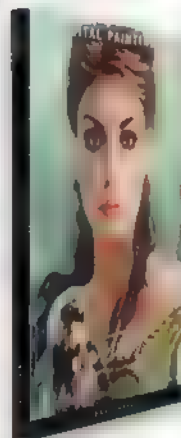
d'artiste: Digital Painting 2

Editors Daniel Wade and Paul Hellard

Publisher Ballistic Publishing

Price \$69 **ISBN** 9781921002571

RATING



Four living legends of the digital art world are brought together in this second showcase of creativity. Marta Dahlig, Melanie Delon, Daniel Docu and Don Seegmiller give insight into their working processes, with galleries, workshops and step-by-steps taking an image from sketch to finished piece.

The four artists are very different in style and work methods, and within their portfolios you can also see a huge range of styles. Compare, for example, Melanie's ethereal *Within Dreams* with her Old Master-inspired *Nemesis*, or Don's creepy *Chupacabara* with his comic *Critter in a Tree*. It's this versatility that makes this book a great showcase and a valuable resource for any artist.

Mechanika

Author Doug Chiang

Publisher Impact Books

Price £15 **ISBN** 9781600610233

RATING



Doug Chiang has worked on films such as *Star Wars Episode I and II*, *War of the Worlds* and *Beowulf*, and won several awards for his artwork. Here he shows how to create robots, machines, spaceships and dramatic scenes with digital painting.

First there's the obligatory 'basics' section, presented well in an easy-to-follow format, including a guide to the tools used in the book. There's also a great checklist outlining the keys to good design.

The projects themselves are easy to follow, with nice, big images and concise but informative steps. Add in some seriously cool robots, and a foreword by Robert Zemeckis, and what more do you need?

Bold Visions: The Digital Painting Bible

ESSENTIAL READING Top games concept artist and ImagineFX favourite Gary Tonge brings you a feast of fantasy and sci-fi techniques

Author Gary Tonge **Publisher** Impact Books **Price** £15
Web www.impact-books.com **ISBN** 9781600610202

Gary Tonge is a familiar face to readers of *ImagineFX*, and now he's imparting his expertise in a new book designed to help you create fantastic fantasy and sci-fi art.

With more than 20 years of experience, Gary is certainly an expert, and he shares his knowledge of digital painting in an easy to follow manner. The workshops are focused on his software of choice, Photoshop, and he also covers Painter, Maya and other 3D packages. Plus there's a look at traditional media, and how to combine digital and traditional art successfully.

The book begins with a guide to materials needed and an illustrated diagram of a digital art studio. Gary provides valuable advice for rookie artists on arranging your workstation and calibrating your monitor, managing your work and backing up your files.

Next, he dissects a space scene to show you exactly what elements go into a digital painting – a wonderfully different approach to the usual one of

showing elements separately before putting them together.

Chapter two concentrates on basic techniques, focusing mainly on Photoshop. Clear diagrams mean that even a newbie will be able to find exactly what they're looking for. The techniques covered in this section are line art and painting with colour,

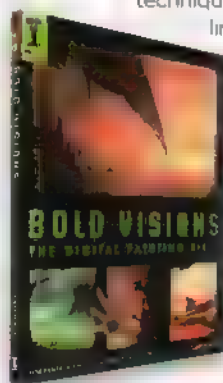
which is examined in more detail in the third chapter, *Colour and Light*.

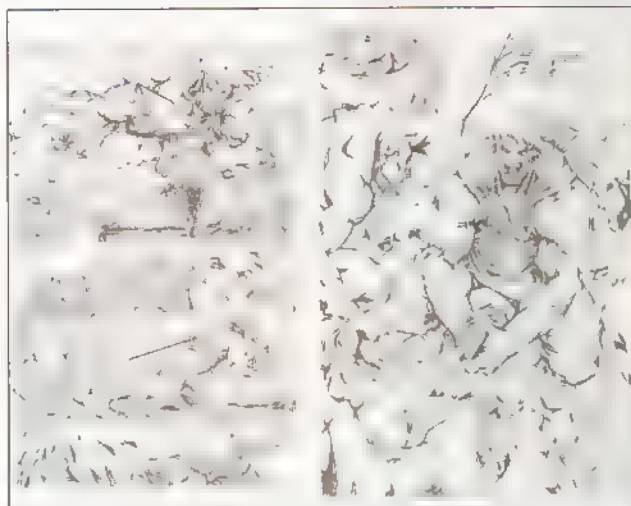
The fourth chapter looks at concept and design, including an example of a brief to work from. Then there's a look at textures and special effects, before Gary examines what you need to know about painting humans (and other creatures), landscapes and

spacescapes, vehicles and buildings.

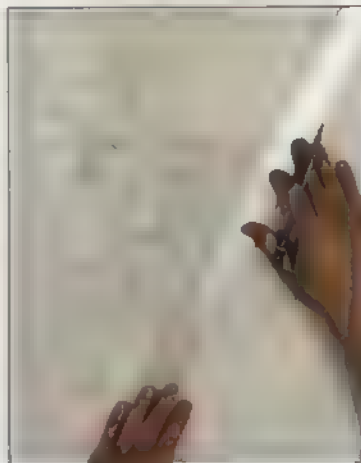
Finally, the concluding chapter looks at what to do with your art when it's finished. Overall, this is a well-presented and easy to follow guide to sci-fi and fantasy digital art, aimed mostly at beginners, but also a useful refresher for all digital artists.

RATING





Alvin remains hands-on throughout his explanation of the creative process.



The distinctive Alvin Lee style is evident in each example, there's some great artwork to aspire to.

Comic Book Layout and Pencilling with Alvin Lee

NOVEL TRAINING Comics artist Alvin Lee explains his approach for creating two sequential comic book pages from script to final pencils

PRICE \$49 **COMPANY** The Gnomon Workshop **WEB** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

If you're a comic book fan you probably know Alvin Lee's work. He's worked for some of the most

prominent comic book publishers including Marvel, Image, DC and Wildstorm. In this latest Gnomon DVD, Alvin walks us through the creation of two sequential comic book pages from start to finish.

After a short introduction in which he gives a breakdown of the DVD content, Alvin moves on to the first section, thumbnailing. As he explains, experienced comic book artists can refrain from creating thumbnails if they have their shots already established mentally after reading a script. But he does remind us that thumbnailing can be useful for breaking down the artist's thought process, making it easier to dissect or for making changes later on.

He also stresses the importance of thumbnails being established to state points of the script, and to facilitate readability from one panel to the next.

The second section examines layout and design techniques. Here, Alvin creates a more thought-out version of

the layout for each page that includes any final details, such as establishing shots properly using camera axis rules before he begins pencilling.

With the layout established, Alvin next moves on to lightboxing, which is the process of transferring the page art from the final layout stage to scale size. Then he looks at bordering, where he explains how your art should be framed within the trim and copy lines of a scale size comic page.

The remaining portion of the DVD concentrates more on Alvin's final pencilling and the techniques he uses for creating soft and hard edges, perspective, speed lines, character anatomy, touch ups and miscellaneous details. As an added bonus, the DVD also comes with additional lecture notes for each chapter and a bonus section showcasing some of Alvin's amazing artwork.

This is a real treat for any aspiring comic book artist and is an invaluable source of information. If you're a fan of Alvin's work or aiming to learn more about the ins and outs of comic book illustration, look no further.

DETAILS

Chapters

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Camera Axis
- 3. Full Bleed
- 4. Thumbnailing
- 5. Sequential
- 6. Page Layout
- 7. Full Bleed Layout

Character Details

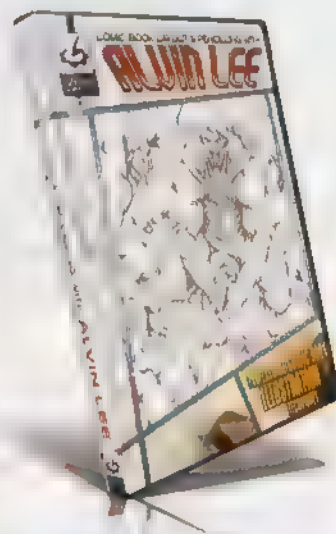
- 8. Sequential Page
- 9. Backgrounds
- 10. Full Bleed
- 11. Character Details
- 12. Full Bleed
- 13. Creature Details
- 14. Full Bleed
- 15. Backgrounds

Length

- 1. 100 minutes

Rating

- 1. R



ALVIN LEE

Alvin Lee is a Canadian born comic book artist best known for his distinctive manga style artwork. His credits include work on the revival of Capcom's Street Fighter comic books and Darkstalkers series as well as game art credits. He has released work with DC Comics, Dreamwave Productions, Marvel Comics and Wildstorm Productions for titles such as



Marvel Mangaverse, Avengers Assemble, X-Men, Age of Apocalypse, Fantastic Four and Gen 13.

www.alvinleeart.com



These three youngsters find themselves in a magical world.

The Spiderwick Chronicles

BROWNIE POINTS With gobbling goblins and brownies under the floorboards, this fantasy is one for the kids

Distributor Paramount Home Entertainment **Certificate** PG **Price** £20 **Release date** Out now

Some children's films can transcend age barriers, to captivate parents and kids alike. Can *The Spiderwick Chronicles*? Well...

Inspired by the series of books by Holly Black and Tony D Terlizzi, the story line sees a separated mum and her three kids moving into a creepy old house inherited from an eccentric aunt. Soon one son (Willy Wonka's Freddie Highmore, playing both halves of a pair of twins) discovers the titular book, written by his great-great-uncle: a field guide to the fantastical creatures that exist, unseen, all around us. Soon the fight is on to prevent fearsome ogre Mulgarath getting his hands on it.

Spiderwick has everything a young kid could want. There are gross bodily functions: a hobgoblin grants people the ability to see the invisible world of

faeries by gobbling in their face. The house has all the requisite wonders: a hidden room, secret tunnels, a brownie scurrying beneath the floorboards. And there are plenty of notions that will fire a child's imagination, like the fact that tomato sauce acts like acid on goblins, and a ring of salt offers protection – parents may want to move the condiments to a high shelf. The bad guys – toad-like, galumphing goblins vicious as pitbulls – are scary enough to inspire nightmares and the effects are industry-standard impressive.

Sadly, while kids will be enraptured, the storyline – which soon breaks down into a series of chases, leavened with family-reconciliation sappiness – isn't sophisticated enough to hold the attention of anyone past puberty.

RATING



Other new releases...

Six animated Batman vignettes and an eerie, hypnotic television show...



Batman: Gotham Knight

Distributor Warner Home Video

Certificate 15

Price £13

Release date Out now

RATING

This may be animated but, as the certificate suggests, it isn't kids' stuff. Inspired equally by the award-winning *Batman: The Animated Series* (Bats is voiced by the same actor, Kevin Conroy) and *Matrix* spin-off *The Animatrix*, *Gotham Knight* collects together six vignettes, each crafted by a different anime director.

In some (such as *Have I Got A Story For You*, in which a group of skateboarders give widely varying accounts of encountering Bats, Rashomon style) he's a mysterious other. Elsewhere (such as highlight *Working Through Pain*, which flashbacks to Bruce Wayne in India learning to manage pain), he's centre-stage. All six look ravishing, but you're left hungry for more – as if you've wolfed down the starter, then found that the main course is off the menu.



La Antena

Distributor Dogwoof Pictures

Certificate PG

Price £15

Release date 18 August

RATING

This low-budget, modern, monochrome Argentinian fantasy is a fascinating throwback to the era of silent cinema. It's set in an unnamed city which is controlled by hypnotic TV broadcasts, where the people have mysteriously lost their voices – everyone, that is, except *The Voice*, a hooded cabaret singer, and her son, a blind boy with featureless flesh where his eyes should be.

Homaging the likes of Fritz Lang and George Melies, and making use of a cinematic vocabulary – and an acting style – that now seems ancient and archaic, *La Antena* (The Aerial) requires the viewer to put in some work, but fully rewards the effort. ●



The first kiss is the deepest and, by the look on Shuichi's face, a surprise



Gravitation Volume One

GUITAR-CROSSED LOVERS Rock 'n' roll dreams and a dose of shonen ai are all you need to succeed...

Distributor MVM **Certificate** 12 **Price** £6 **Release Date** Out now

Unashamedly shonen ai and packed to the gills with gorgeous guys and snappy music, Gravitation sits somewhere between Beck and any one of a number of romantic anime series. Except Gravitation has a twist; yes, it's all about boys. Shonen ai is incredibly popular with teenage girls in Japan and can be characterised by beautiful boys and unlikely romances, but it's still quite tame.

Shuichi Shindo is a likeable kid, a bit with the strangest shade of pink hair, who wants nothing more than to be a successful pop idol. Wishing to emulate his idol, pop sensation Ryuichi Sakum, Shuichi forms a band, Bad Luck, with his friend Hiro. Mulling over the latest lyrics one night, Shuichi drops them while walking in a park and they're picked up by an elder man –



later revealed to be novelist Eiri Yuki – who pronounces them worthless and that Shuichi has no talent whatsoever. Crushed, all Shuichi can do is watch the man walk away, but fate has other things in mind. Incensed, Shuichi finishes his song and runs into Eiri again and again, nearly killing himself in the process. These two are destined to be together but that doesn't mean it's going to be easy.

Gravitation isn't new, the anime (created by Studio Deen) aired on Japanese TV in 2000 and the age is a little obvious. While the transfer is good, it's clear this isn't a recent show but that's not the point. It's different to other series we've been exposed to but won't be to all tastes (especially if you don't like anime centred on rock bands) but is still worth watching.

RATING

Also look at...

Adventures of a divine deity and tables turning in a virtual world made real



Ah! My Goddess: Flights of Fancy Vol 2

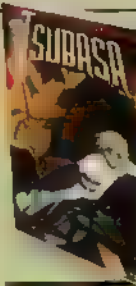
Distributor ADV
Certificate PG
Price £15
Release Date Out now
RATING



Bel dandy's adventures living with Keiichi continue. Dialling Heaven yet again (how's that for luck?) Keiichi accidentally summons Peorth. Bell's rival at the Earth Support Office Peorth immediately starts

causing chaos in the Temple, determined to grant Keiichi's wish by any means – and she really means it.

The series continues to mix beautiful animation with a touching love story. It can feel slow at times, which makes the standalone episodes a welcome diversion. Peorth's introduction also increases the comic relief as well as pushing Bel dandy and Keiichi closer together. If you've never seen Ah! My Goddess before, this volume is a perfect introduction and if you've followed the series since day one then it's a much-awaited continuation.



Tsubasa Reservoir Chronicle Vol 5

Distributor Revelation Films
Certificate PG
Price £16
Release Date Out now
RATING



As the series nears its epic conclusion, Syaoran and co are exploring the land of Outo, where demons walk at night. But someone is spying on the group; a mysterious man who knows Syaoran from long ago

who holds something very precious to Sakura.

This beautiful arc exemplifies both the music and animated masterpiece that is Tsubasa. The sight of a red moon and falling cherry blossoms accentuated by Yuki Kajiura's ethereal score makes this volume one of the best as the plot continues to advance to an inevitable end. The series has had its ups and downs but seldom has it had so much packed into four episodes from cameos to incredible revelations. All fans should watch this! ●

THE FAT ORC

ISSUE: 011 • ARTIST: JEFF MURCHIE • WE: WWW.38STUDIOS.COM



Jeff Murchie's corpulent image

from issue 11 was directly

inspired by Lord of the Rings

At the time, Jeff was working

on LOTR Online Shadows of

Angmar as part of Turbine Games. The

brief was very open to interpretation but I

wanted it to be a believable character."

he says now "If I went too far into high

fantasy it would not stay consistent with

the Lord of the Rings world."

The subject matter was exactly the

sort of thing that Jeff thrives on as an

artist "This was a very fun piece! I love

painting big, massive monsters with a

combination of fat and muscle to convey

power." Jeff is currently working at 38

Studios, a game company whose

founders include Todd McFarlane and

fantasy writer R. A. Salvatore.



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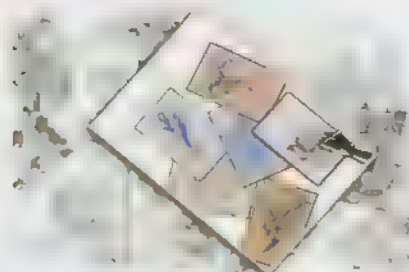
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Out of this world

From modelling spacecraft
to animating a moonwalk:
five stellar tutorials for
leading 3D applications

IMAGE BY: Anders Lejczak, www.colacola.se

Also in issue 107

- **Full 3D modelling software**
On the CD: Hexagon 1.2 (as sold for \$249)
- **Free 3D hardware guide**
13 professional workstations on test
- **The making of WALL-E**
Pixar discusses Luxo, Jr's spiritual successor

3D World: The magazine for 3D artists

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WELCOME TO THE FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX COMPANION DVD

Fantasy art brushes, a complete multiplayer game, and great videos

Hello! My name's Scott and I've just taken over the ImagineFX DVD. Don't worry, I'll still bring you the same high quality disc, packed with just as many handy goodies as Tom did.

We've got some great stuff this issue, including a large selection of fantasy art brushes, courtesy of Hawksmont Universe; Exteel, a completely free-to-play mecha multiplayer online RPG game, in which you can create your own custom robot and duke it out with other giant robotic mechs; and, last but not least, another instalment of Charles Bernard's FutureTrek series.

We also have workshops from Henning Ludvigsen, Marta Dahlig, Marek Okon, Ron Lemen, and our cover artist, Saejin Oh. As always FXPosé is packed full of amazing artists too, so check out their work – and then why not submit some yourself? Send it in, or upload it to the galleries at www.imaginefx.com – and while you're there, don't forget to leave me a message on the forums with any suggestions for the disc. (Polite ones only, please...)



Scott Ewart,
DVD Editor

Contact details

Want to send us feedback?

Like to see your artwork or software on this DVD?

Contact us using the details below...

Reader artwork: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Email the DVD editor: Scott Ewart, scott.ewart@futurenet.co.uk

Postal address: ImagineFX magazine, Future Publishing Ltd,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, UK

DVD problems? Email support@futurenet.co.uk, or phone
+44 (0) 1225 822 743 and ask to speak to disc support.

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FREE! HAWKSMONT BRUSHES

An amazing array of
fantasy art brushes, for
both commercial and
non-commercial use!

Exteel, the free-to-play online shooter game



If you like mechs, you'll love this Massively Multiplayer Online game from NCsoft. Exteel is a third-person shooter in which you take giant customised mechs into combat to compete for supremacy.

The game is completely free to play, but you will need to register online.

Full listing:

DEMO SOFTWARE

- Photoshop CS3 (Mac & PC)
- Painter X (Mac & PC)
- The Archive (Mac & PC)
- Project Dogwaffle Pro 4 (PC)
- Doggy FX 1.2 (PC)

RESOURCES AND EXTRAS

- Exteel MMO
- FigureTrek video
- Hawksmont brushes
- Vyonyx textures
- CG wallpapers
- ImagineFX wallpapers
- Q&A files

WORKSHOP FILES

- **EXCLUSIVE TO IMAGINEFX**

Follow this month's workshops with these high-resolution, multi-layered files.





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See individual workshop pages for file details



With workshop files from:

- Saejin Oh
- Marta Dahlig
- Henning Ludvigsen
- Marek Okon
- Ron Lemen

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- Painter X • The Archive • Vyonix textures
- Doggy FX 1.2 • Project Dogwaffle Pro 4
- Figure1rek video • Wallpapers • Q&A files
- Exteel MMO

SEE PAGE 114 FOR FULL LISTING

MAC
&
PC

WORKSHOP FILES

Follow this month's workshops with these high-resolution, multi-layered files.

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